

#11
tuesday 23
june 2020

THE MIDDLESBROUGH SETTLEMENT

Alex Wood recommends air-cleaning plants for your home

ARTWORK OF THE WEEK

Thea Tolsma's *Necklace*

LOOKING THROUGH BRASS TINTED GOGGLES

Jamie Sample reminisces about the Whitby Steampunk weekend

OUR HOMES ARE A MUSEUM

Deborah shares a print by AK Knol

TEES VALLEY TREASURE

The Northern Marsh Orchid

GROWING UP

Get your crayons out! This week we are making rubbings

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE!?

Kathleen Haley's painting and co-produced poems from Camphill Village Trust community members

THINGS TO DO

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

ARLO'S COMIC STRIP

Fresh from the mind of MIMAZINA's 'in-house' cartoonist

ENTERTAIN ME

This week's recommendations

CONTRIBUTIONS

We need stories for future issues!



THE MIDDLESBROUGH SETTLEMENT

As part of The Barrow, throughout last summer, bio-scientist Alex Wood worked with communities in Middlesbrough to share the benefits some plants have on our air quality. Here, he gives a guide to air-cleaning plants. The Barrow was a mobile garden and place for making, plotting, swapping and talking about the environment. It was developed by Wayward following conversation with residents and commissioned by MIMA in 2019 as part of the Middlesbrough Settlement, MIMA's Great Place Tees Valley project, funded by Arts Council England and Heritage Lottery.

Words: Alex Wood /
Image: Barberton daisy / Credit: Image courtesy
of Shades of Green



A who's who of indoor air- cleaning plants

Links between mental health and nature have long been explored through many studies. One theory proposes that the link runs as deep as the human species' early evolution in close proximity to nature. Whatever the reason, being around nature does increase our mental health and wellbeing. There is one more trick up nature's sleeve though - plant's extraordinary efficiency at cleaning our air. Here are my top recommendations for air-cleaning plants in the home:





Image: The Barrow visits North Ormesby Market
Credit: Image courtesy of MIMA

Image: Spider plant / Credit: Image courtesy of MIMA

Spider Plant (*Chlorophytum comosum*)

An almost perfect plant for beginners, spider plants are aptly named because of their spider-like looks, with long elegant leaves bordered in light green/white. They have a high tolerance to a wide range of conditions and suffer from very few ailments. Place them in indirect sunlight and they'll grow just about anywhere. Spider plants have been shown to remove formaldehyde and xylene which are commonly used in paints (including varnishes), adhesives, cleaning products and textiles. Top tip: Spider plants prefer to be watered well and allowed to dry, so don't be afraid to let the soil to dry out a little between watering.

English Ivy (*Hedera helix*)

This perennial likes to climb but is also happy being placed high and cascading down. Most commonly used as ground cover underneath trees, English ivy is favoured for its ability to grow in shaded areas. The luscious green leaves are often outlined with light green or white. English ivy has been shown to reduce airborne faecal matter, making it a perfect addition to any bathroom because it cleans the air! A small note: if your bathroom has very little light, move your plant to enjoy the sun for 4 hours a day.

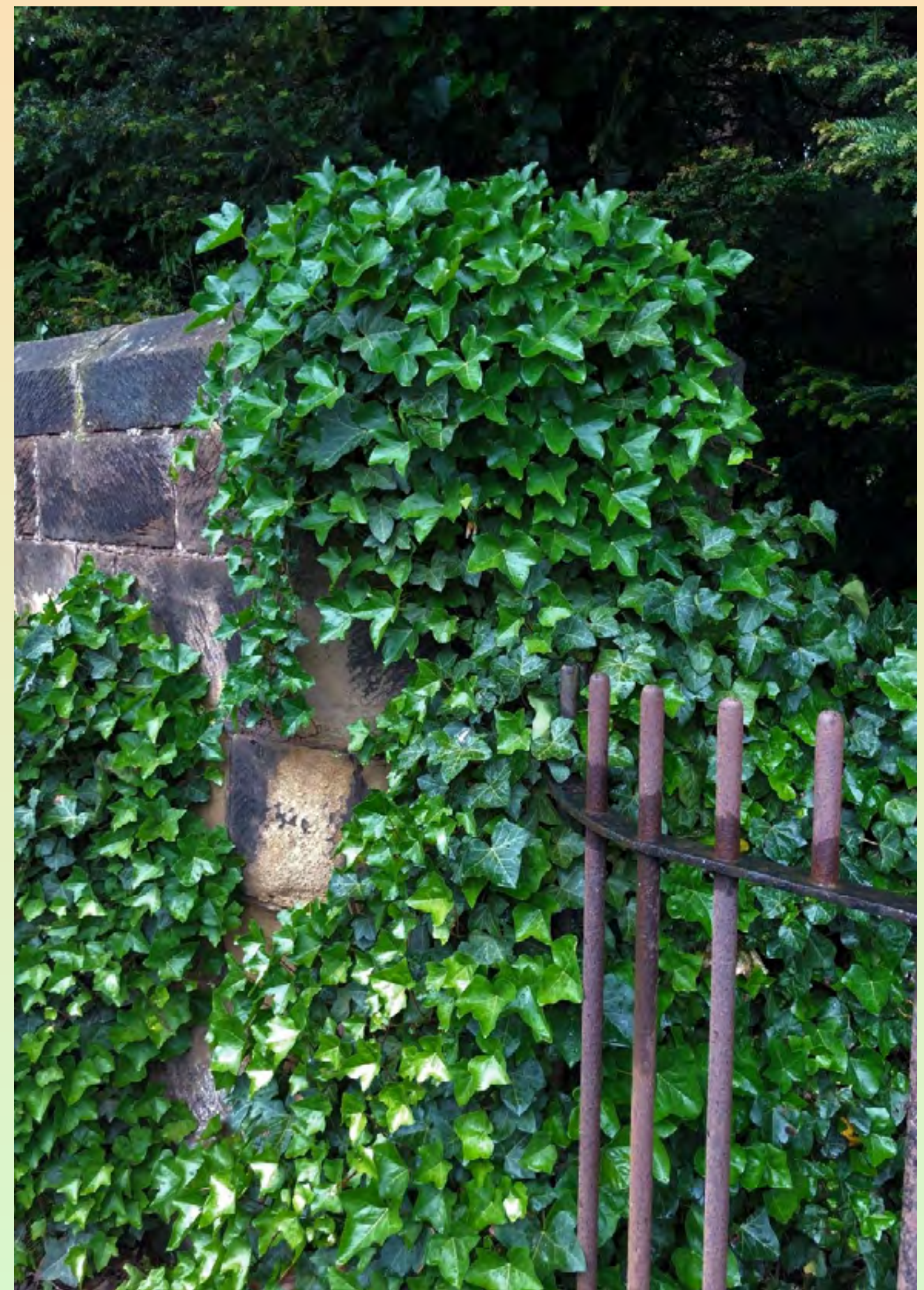


Image: English ivy / Credit: Alex Wood

Barberton Daisy (*Gerbera jamesonii*)

A beautiful flowering perennial commonly used as a border plant, indoors its flowers should last 4-6 weeks. This sun-loving plant is commonly found in red, pink, white and yellow and hybrid versions with multi-coloured petals can be easily found. The Barberton daisy is effective at reducing formaldehyde, trichloroethylene and benzene which are found in a range of household products from paints to synthetic fibres like fabrics used for carpets and sofas. Note: these plants like to be well watered but must be in a well-draining soil, excessive water retention will cause root rot.



Image: Barberton daisy
Credit: Image courtesy of [Shades of Green](#)

If you're interested in finding out more about the air cleansing quality of indoor plants, check out NASA's clean air study [here](#).

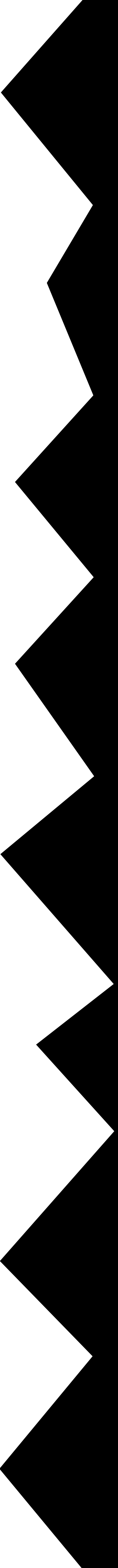
Necklace, 1988

Thea Tolsma
b. 1956, The Netherlands

Rubber

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 issue we select an artwork to share...





This unusual necklace by Dutch jewellery designer Thea Tolsma is made from the inner tube of a bicycle tyre. The long black rubber accessory designed to drape around the neck is made of multiple thin zig-zag strands, each painstakingly cut out by hand.

Tolsma studied Textiles at De Witte Lelie University in Amsterdam (1977-1983), and later Textile Design at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy, Amsterdam (1983-1986). There she was taught by artist Maria Blaisse amongst others. After attending a party, wearing her first rubber necklace, the interest and enthusiasm shown in the piece confirmed that jewellery making was what she really wanted to do.

For Tolsma, the rubber material and the tyre tube shape are both vital in her making process. She experiments with a variety of inner tubes to understand which type will best lend itself to her designs. Can the rubber be easily cut and at the same time still retain its shape? Her practice involves drawing intricate filigree inspired patterns on the inflated inner tube before careful cutting away the detail between the lines. This is very different to the typical ornamental technique of filigree which would usually consist of fine gold or silver wire being intertwined into delicate designs. The colour on the outside of the tube can at times differ from that on the inside, producing stunning effects. Sometimes other materials such as precious metals and stones are also incorporated.

Thea currently lives and works in Amsterdam in the Netherlands. Her work is represented in many gallery collections internationally including Galerie RA in Amsterdam, a gallery renowned for specialising in contemporary jewellery design •

Looking Through Brass Tinted Goggles with Jamie Sample

If you would like to share an article in MIMAZINA please get in touch. It could be topical and timely or more personal and reflective – these pages are for you!

As the effects of the current *Situation COVID!* forced the cancelling of the one and only Whitby Steampunk Weekend (nightmare!!) I'm here digitally looking at photos, videos and reading stories of previous gatherings and steaming my brass tinted goggles up with my sad tears...

Words: Jamie Sample



Let me explain: Steampunk is an eclectic mix of science fiction and 19th century - Victorian era - style. It combines old with new through modern-day items made with wood, brass and copper, as well as classic Victorian clothing, such as top hats, waistcoats, goggles, corsets, bustles and fascinators.

My love of all things Steampunk is three years old and it got my attention when I was performing in the show 'Erimus' at Middlesbrough Town Hall with Streetwise Opera. The show was award-winning, winning Best Local Authority Art Project at the North East Culture Awards. After the

performance I was invited to a big banquet at Middlesbrough Town Hall. The invite stated dress for the future with a nod to the past. Being the big geek I am this was music to my Steampunk ears.

Dressed up in my bestest suit, waistcoat, larger than life top hat and goggles, I was good to go and ready for action.

Last summer I dressed up once again, and was living the Steampunk dream. I jumped on the bus to Whitby for the Steampunk Weekend, a wonderful, whimsical world of friendliness and fun. It's held twice a year within the beautiful Whitby Pavilion.

I felt a bit nervous, being an outsider trying to join this good-looking community. Turns out I had nothing to fear. As I walked around and said my best Steampunk 'hello', I was greeted with a smile and good conversation, nothing but friendly people.

I soon got talking to a blue-haired Canadian pixie (who would later become a good friend) who told me about the parade, an opportunity for me and thousands of others to celebrate their fantastical costumes. Quick as a flash I joined up and got talking to a fellow Steampunk who said, "to truly get the full experience you need to stay full weekend."

The Parade was amazing and full of good spirited humans, great music, events and workshops along the way. As we walked near to the Whitby Whale Bone Arch, a group of scouts who were playing crazy golf stopped me for a photo opportunity... fame at last! After the parade I said my goodbyes but promised to stay the full weekend next time and meet up with my new friends. I've been back twice now and loved every minute of it. Dressed up every time in all my glory - I make all my own upcycled costumes - it's turned into the best hobby ever. I've made amazing new friends and I'm officially now a founder member of the Steampunk community. Most of my time is spent following Steampunk artists and bands such as Professor Elemental, Steampunk and chap-hop musical artist, Mr. B the Gentleman Rhymmer, and Alice's Night Circus.

The best part about the Steampunk community is no one is judged on race, religion, sexuality or class and I can really be my true self. I'm currently planning my next Whitby adventure... Watch this SPACE!

Jamie is MIMA's award winning Community Day volunteer, who brightens up everyone's day and is a Steampunk Dreamer.

OUR HOMES ARE A MUSEUM

What art in your home do you think should be added to these pages? Each week we would love to share a piece from people's homes. We are really interested in art that speaks to you, or that has an interesting story behind how it came to be in your home.



Words: Deborah Bower / Image: AK Knol

This monoprint is by AK Knol, an important friend and one of my favourite artists. It was made as part of a series called Meisner Maybes and there were 250 or so of them printed over 8 sessions following an exercise in automatism (where the creative process is guided by free association and the subconscious).

The prints were made after AK had enrolled on an improvisation class where she learnt the Meisner technique, a tool for actors. The method aims to get the actor out of their own head and to respond to the others and their relationships. AK describes:



"Meisner is a repetition method which is usually carried out between 2 people. The first person might start with a simple observation, such as 'You are ready.' To which the other might then respond 'I am ready.' This exchange would be repeated until a more emotional analysis evolves: 'You're frustrated' ... 'I am frustrated!'"

"I adapted this technique by applying it to the process of printmaking and by choosing the printing press as my partner. I wanted to capture the mood and its associations while producing prints."

Two years later in 2018, AK discovered she had breast cancer. As friends we all tried to help as much as we could with looking after AK especially during the chemo treatment. I went to Berlin to stay and help her during one of the early chemo sessions.

The week we spent together was weirdly full of such fond memories. My 10 month old son Louis was also with us and before the chemo treatment we had a few days of being in Berlin and having fun together. We saw art exhibitions, we ate falafel, we chatted non-stop. Then we prepared. And then there was the sad, sad toughness of the treatment and the pain and illness that came with it.

But the very worst passed quicker than we thought it would. Louis and I brought AK little plates of cooked potato, bits of pears, trying to think of the plainest - yet enticing - food to pick her up a bit. We were able to gently enjoy being in each other's company, rather than in totally different countries as we usually are.

We have often spoken about what a special time it was together, though it feels strange or wrong to say that. But I suppose when you love a friend who is far away, time together is special and to be able to look after them is in a way a privilege. AK said to me that she felt that this time was special too because she felt so loved and cared for.

It was during this week that AK gave me this print as a gift. She had many of them and it was totally joyful going through them together and picking which one I would take home with me. This print always reminds me of this time and of the strength and resilience that my friend always seems to have in abundance. I'm really grateful to have a piece of art that holds these feelings of that time together and of our friendship •

You can also hear AK talk about the Meisner Maybe prints [here](#).

TEES VALLEY TREASURE

This article asks readers to propose overlooked or unknown gems from the Tees Valley. Each week we ask you to tell us about something:

- it could be very old or more recent
- but it has to be treasure to you.

Northern Marsh Orchid - Hyperchromic Form

Words and images: Elinor Morgan



This week I went orchid hunting and it made me think that some of the things I treasure most in the Tees Valley are living things and natural elements. When I moved here I couldn't believe how beguiling the landscape was – the strange combinations of giant structures and wild plant-life captured me and I am still enthralled to it.

The monumental architecture of the chemical works around Haverton Hill giving way to the marshes of Seal Sands, where cows and seals live in the same wet

fields?!! The huge steelworks at Redcar butting up to dunes, the flat expanse of the beach, that wild sea and the huge wind turbines, all bordered by the golf course and car parks. The massive expanses of the moors – like an ocean – with all their layers of human activity over thousands of years. In amongst this gigantism, it's the tiny elements that excite me. The curlew chicks, ungainly but still with their incredible call, and the wild flowers that push their way up among the monoculture of heather or the rubbly ground by the coast.

It is this butting up of the wild and unplanned with the infrastructures of industry and human life is what draws me to the North Gare and it's what the orchids there epitomise. North Gare is the spit of land – built not natural – that creates the top jaw of the mouth of the River Tees as it meets the sea. It's close to parts of the chemical works, the nuclear power station and sometimes oil rigs come on land there to be broken down.

Lots of people are as obsessed with it as me. We have been on two public site visits through MIMA with experts picking out things of interest and constituents sharing their private passions about the place. And I have taken countless artists and

visiting friends and family. I know from Instagram that the film maker Warren Harrison who made *The Creek*, the brilliant film about a nearby place, goes there regularly; there is a [Teesmouth Bird Club](#) and there are people who've spent a lot of time studying its wildlife. It's just great. The thrill of the vast gives me energy. I could write a book about that place.

The orchids! I first heard about them when working with the botany writer Helen Bynum. Helen had written lots of books about plants and I picked one up as a treat on a visit to the British Museum. I loved how she used plants as a way to talk about lots of other things: human lives, histories of trade and manufacture, wider points about inequality and ecology. I think that's what I do in my work; use art to talk about a lot of connected things. I thought she'd be great to bring into a big project we were doing at MIMA about the environment that connected the local area with global issues at a time of public consciousness about climate emergency (which is still important by the way!).

So I emailed her and her collaborator William Bynum thinking that they were too important to get back to me but it was worth a pop. When they replied saying

they'd love to do something I felt so elated. Working with experts from other disciplines to share knowledge and make new things happen is one of my great joys in life. So Helen and I started working together on a small book that highlights seven plant species – Bogmosses, Turnips, Himalayan Balsam, Kelp,* Orange, Oil Palm – that are a way into talking about elements of the Tees Valley's history and some important concerns in the world today.

We chose the plants together but one that Helen proposed, I had never heard of: the Northern Marsh Orchid. Helen's piece captures the push and pull between industry and ecology perfectly. She shows how the development of the area's chemical works is probably behind the orchids being in the area and developing in unique ways, but also that humans' consumption of the earth's resources and energy is endangering their future.

'Today the human-made landscape inland from the North Gare dunes is dominated by a nuclear power station. Go back a hundred years and the skyline was broken by the chimneys of a zinc smelter and sulphuric acid factory. The zinc came from Australian mines, shipped

around the globe, processed and used to galvanise Tees Valley steel. The smelting produced various wastes including sulphur dioxide. The acid works turned sulphur dioxide into sulphuric acid, a boon for the developing chemical industry. Some people think that the extra colour found in orchids is a response to the pollution left over from the zinc works, which potentially changed the amount of zinc found in the soil where the plants grow... Local industry may or may



not have helped create these particularly purple orchids, but this is the only place they grow in England. If global climate change causes their landscape to disappear as sea levels rise, we may not even be able to ask such questions.'

It's a year since the big exhibition at MIMA and the little book that accompanied it, so it felt fitting to go and see how the orchids were doing. It had been a week of horrible weather where I live and just as we got going, our picnic

in the car, the sun started to come out. The closer we got to the North Gare, though, the more we seemed to be arriving into yet another thick sea fret. We got our rain macs on, caught up with our friend for our physically distant, socially close walk, and stomped over to the beach with our picnic. After we'd eaten in thick fog we went over the dunes and into the low, marshy bit between them and the golf course (they seem to be everywhere I go!).



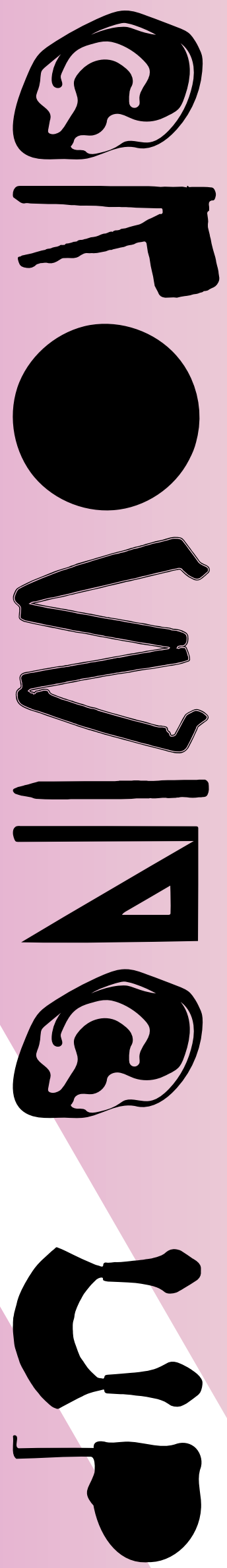
The first orchid I spotted, I shouted so loud that I attracted the attention of some other walkers who were a bit scared of my strange excitement about the tiny flowers. As soon as I saw one, they seemed to be all around us. Like an image coming into focus, the dots of purple were suddenly scattered everywhere amongst the long green grasses. Each one is slightly different in size and colour with a few distinct shapes and leaf-patterns amongst them. My friend likes knowing all the names but I just love looking at the differences between them all. I love the spots on their leaves and the shapes of their tiny flowers, each one with its own markings.

I hope some of you might be able to go orchid hunting. I think they'll be around until September and they're worth the trip. While you're there, look out for the strange material, slag from the steelworks that reinforces the dunes, and egrets, the lovely tall white birds. And watch out for flying golf balls ▪



*Some of you botany geeks will notice that kelp isn't a plant, it's actually a protist.

You will be able to buy Helen's book *Plants in and out of place*, published by MIMA and designed by the brilliant Joanna Deans, when MIMA reopens.



Rubbing

This week is all about the surface textures that we have at arm's reach. Stones, wood, plants, walls, everyday objects in the home... the list is endless once you start looking about and taking notice and it's great fun.

We started with 'I Spy' to get us noticing and ready for surface texture action. We played this for ages and had a good old fashioned laugh!

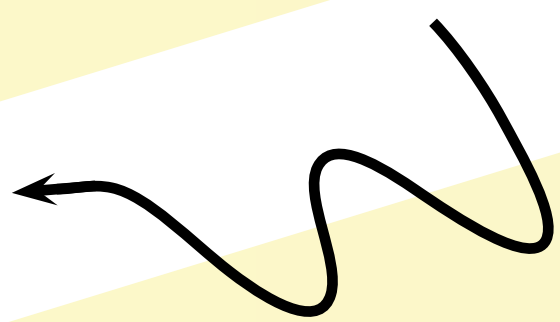
Gather your stuff (mine is really random) and take it to the surface texture you have noticed. I used coloured pencils but crayons, pens, chalk and paint are great too – I made do with what I had. Give everything a go and see, feel what happens...

Here we share tips from Community Campus Learning Garden. MIMA works with experts, students and artists who are passionate about the environment. Weekly sessions focus on food, ecology, horticulture and sharing skills with other gardening and growing enthusiasts.





Tape, hold, stick your paper over the object or surface and then rub - use your pencil, chalk or whatever you have, and as if by magic your paper will reveal the surface below. I love this!



I also gave it a go on my evening walk which was good fun and as usual 2 metre passerby's got inspired and skipped home to try it out with family and friends.



Share pictures of your rubbings with MIMA by tagging @mimauseful

This smiley trio is Lisette, Mark and Harper Lee.

“Mam took this picture after she'd dropped off some scones on our wall. Which she'd forgotten to put any sugar in...”

Lisette Auton is an amazing Disabled writer,

performer and creative practitioner, one of MIMA’s longstanding Critical Friends and artist working across the programme with the MIMA Team. Harper Lee is a dog who likes food, playing and going for walks; Mark isn’t sharing.

*Bright pink love heart boots: model’s own



Words: Claire Pounder

This new archive documents and captures life in lockdown and the experiences of the extraordinary people and families MIMA work with and serve.

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?



We would love to see what you have been up to. These pages in future issues will be reserved for pictures of readers' creative activities. Send your photographs to: info@foundationpress.org

Kathleen Haley sent us in this painting she has done. Kathleen has been painting for just a year and has been really enjoying it since she has retired.

a bird is singing

hear it now

reddy coloured leaves
on trees to our right

blow the dandelion clock away

tell us the time

bobbling in the air

it's past three o'clock

holly bush berries in bud

yellow carpet field

buttercups under your chin

white one - butterfly

motorbike sounds

they are off again - up high

beechnut fallen

chimney stack smokes

bubbling water

stone - some green

black orange moss

brickwork reflects

These poems have been
co-produced and sent in
by the creative folk at the
Camphill Village Trust.



Little holidays



Summer holidays when little
Picnics on the grass or on the sand
Grains in my feet and on my hands
The sea nearby and the waves
Folding water from the skies.



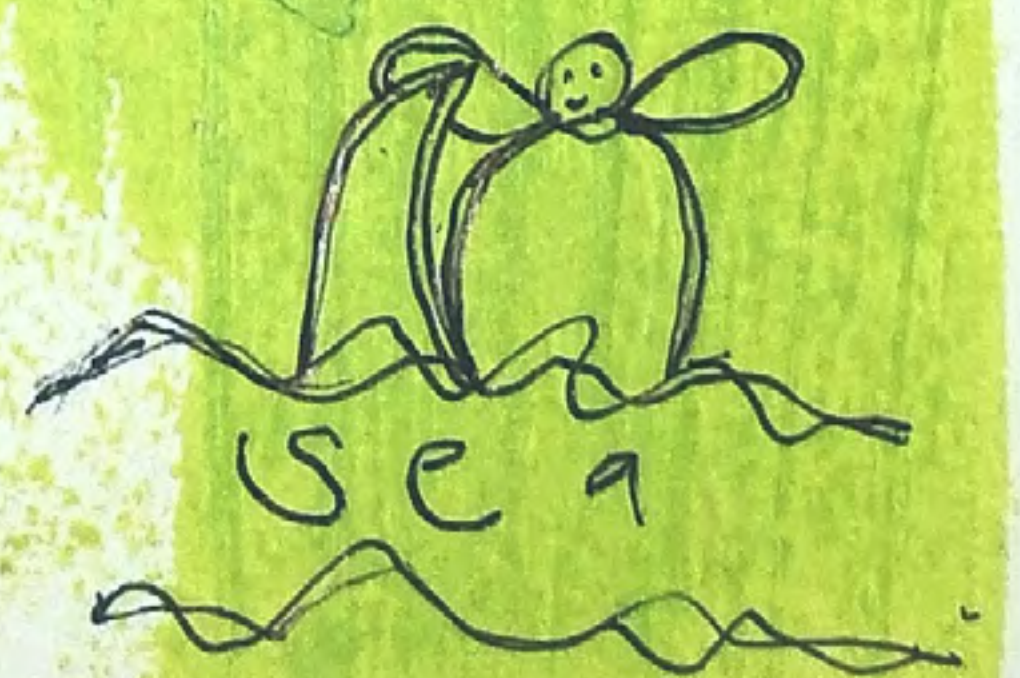
Seaweed, salty air and ice cream
Away from the house walking new soils
No cars or buses and their smoky noise
A barbecue fills the air and the music,
Like fresh bread, tastes delicious.



Sun cream and sticky lollies
A pile of sweet citrus in my little
fingers



Seagulls nicking chips, vinegar lingers
And fresh-grass-smell that follows
The sound of the mowers. And how could
I ever forget homemade egg sandwiches
And mum's scones with sun warmed butter

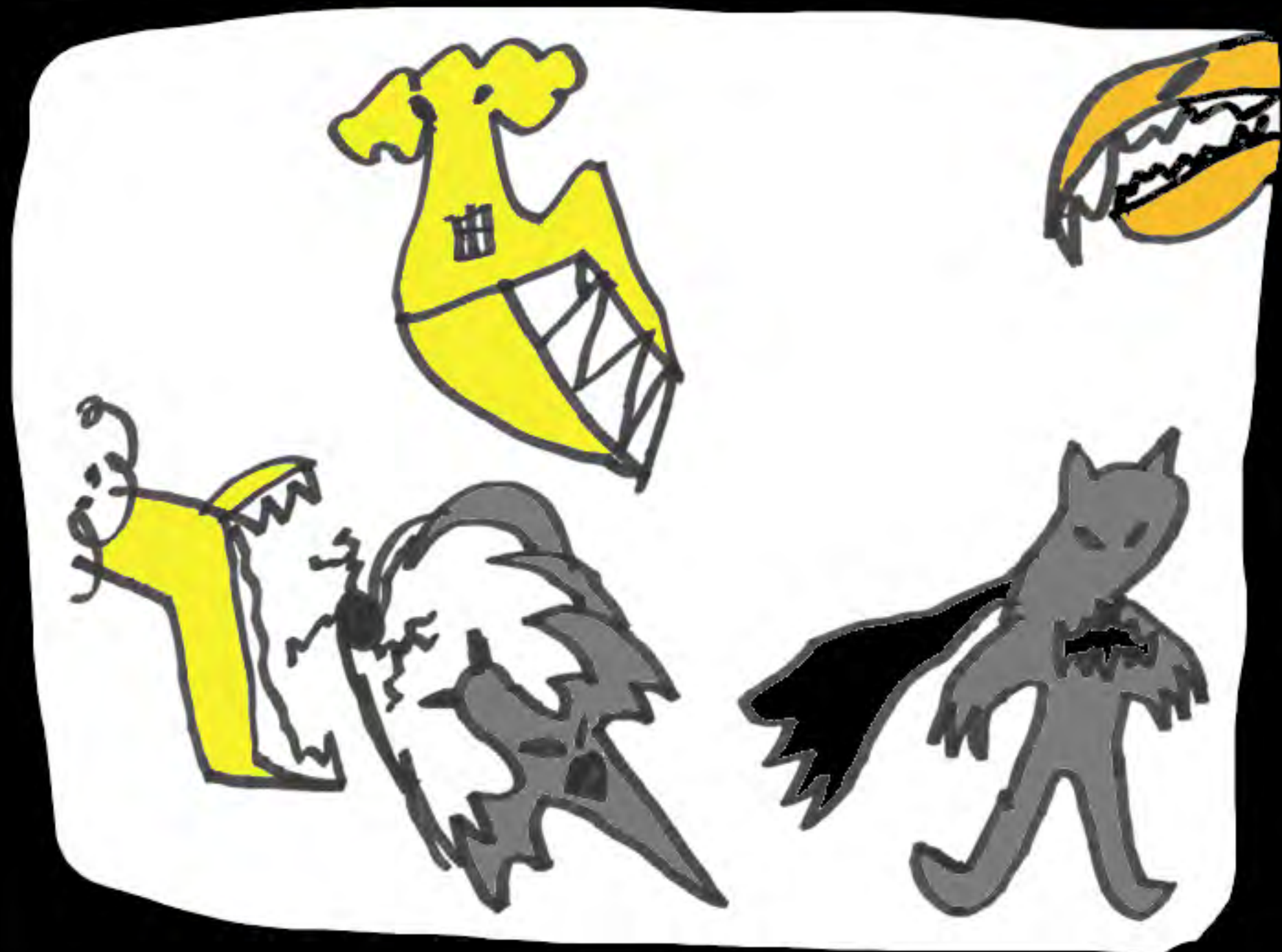


make a



things

sculpture



Weekly Thunk

Philosophical fun for all the family. A thunk is a simple question with NO right or wrong answer. It makes you stop and think about the world around you. The thunk for this week is:

Can you be prepared for a surprise?

YouTubing?

Title: The Bead Game

Artist: Ishu Patel

Year: 1977

Duration: 5 mins

[Click Here](#)

Ishu Patel gives us a rich animation that uses thousands of beads transforming and morphing into different creatures. A labour of love.

You can also watch [Perspectrum here](#). This is another animation made by Patel in 1975. This film is totally abstract with shapes moving along to music played on a Koto, a 13-stringed Japanese instrument.

MIMAZINA NEEDS YOUR HELP!

Share your
stories,
photographs
and letters in
future issues
of MIMAZINA.

CONTRIBUTIONS WANTED, INCLUDING:

• WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!

Share a picture of your activities and creative work.

• OUR HOMES ARE A MUSEUM

Send pictures of an artwork from your home that you love or that has an interesting story behind it.

• TEES VALLEY TREASURE

Suggest intriguing artefacts from the Tees Valley. We are interested in a real variety and those that have a story to tell! They can be historical or more recent.

• FOLK STORIES

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

• ONE-OFF ARTICLES AND STORIES

Write us a short article on a subject of your choosing. We are specifically interested in writing relating to personal experience of lockdown and the Tees Valley past, present and future.

Notes for submissions:

- 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.

MIMAZINA #11

Credits

Contributors

Alex Wood
Camphill Village Trust
community members
Claire Pounder
Elinor Morgan
Foundation Press
Harper Lee
Heather Bareham
Helen Prior
Jamie Sample
Kate Pounder
Kate Moses
Kathleen Haley
Lisette Auton
Mark
Natalie Gale
Olivia Heron

Cartoon

Arlo Fleming

Designed by

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(Adam Phillips and
Deborah Bower)

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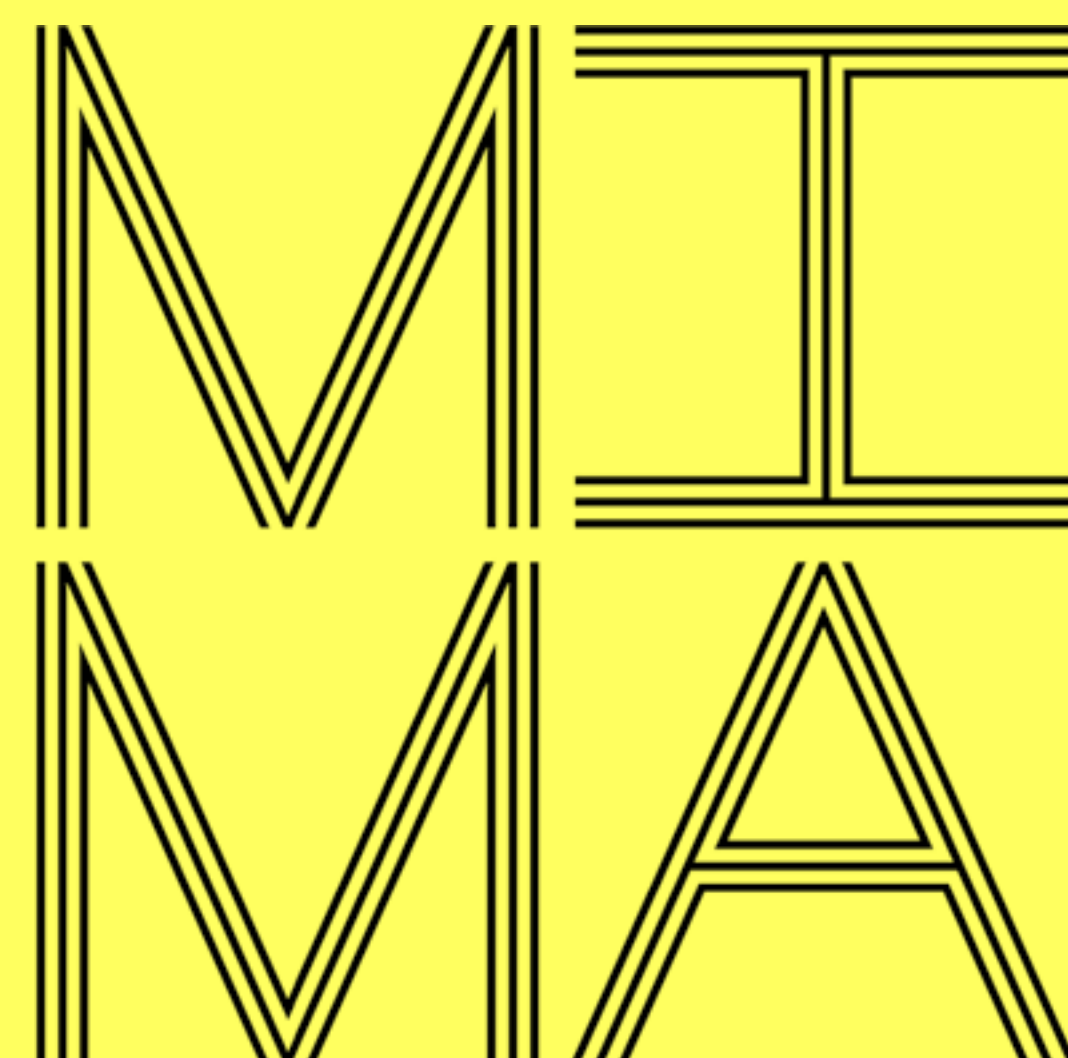
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artists, students and
communities.

foundationpress.org
@foundation.press

MIMA

Middlesbrough Institute
of Modern Art
Centre Square
Middlesbrough
TS1 2AZ

mima.art
@mimauseful



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**That's all for now –
see you next week.**