

BENEATH THE PAVEMENT





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**A PUBLIC REALM PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT RESIDENCY**

INTRODUCTION

City planners, governors and stakeholders all over the world are waking up to the value (both in economic terms, and in placemaking terms) of culture and creativity, and for that reason many are building art and artists into their vision.

Stoke-on-Trent is a city very much in the process of changing and developing, making now the perfect time to discuss the role of the artist within these developments, and to begin to demonstrate how artists can rethink public space and open the conversation with the public about its experience and consumption of it.

In July, 2014, Appetite and the City Centre Partnership commissioned AirSpace Gallery to design a consultation and visioning programme designed to work with artists to find spaces and opportunities in the city centre for artists and other creative practitioners to work, put on events and activities, but also to consider how the city might work differently, identifying the gaps and the opportunities to be found here. From this, AirSpace Director, Anna Francis created *Beneath the Pavement*, drawing on previous experience of leading professional development activity for artists, as well as a working knowledge of a city in flux.

Over two days, four lead artists - Anna Francis, Emily Speed, S Mark Gubb and Dan Thompson worked with fifteen applicant artists to explore the City Centre; scrutinising its open and overlooked spaces, identifying

opportunities and responding to its particularities and peculiarities. The artists then used their own artistic practice and experience to develop a series of proposals for a brighter cultural future for the city centre of Stoke-On-Trent.

What follows is documentation from the programme, showing what we did and how we did it, and the fantastic responses of the artists in drawing out what can be found *Beneath the Pavement*.

THE FORMAT

We discussed the history of, as well as the recent and future developments within, the city centre and the challenges and opportunities of working in a city like Stoke-on-Trent.

A series of approaches were set out by lead artists which talked about temporary intervention, and testing the rhetoric of development in cities through arts practice, as well as exploring the uses and impact of cultural activity on the city, and elsewhere.

A number of tours took place, which all aimed to view and scrutinise the city differently.

On day two an inspirational talk by curator and programmer Jennie Syson offered food for thought.

The artists tested their thoughts out in the open, on the street, and discussed how this felt, and what arose from the activity, and then plans were made for the showcase event.

THINKING OF THE CITY CENTRE

Over the two days of Beneath the Pavement, the artists explored the city and considered what is working; what may need improvement; and what a successful Stoke would look like. These are some of the captured thoughts.

BENEATH THE PAVEMENT ...THE BEACH



GOOD THINGS IN THE CITY CENTRE

- * Lots of little squares and impromptu greenspaces *
- * **Empty buildings with lots of potential** *
- * A walkable circle – a “ring road” *
- * **The old bus station and derelict shopping mall (an opportunity for artists)** *
- * The mix of old and new *
- * **Bethesda Gardens** *

* People wanting to make things happen *

*** Public realm opportunities ***

* Loads a space for events *

*** Fallow areas ***

* The vistas of the moors *

*** Individual characterful buildings and features ***

* Pedestrianisation *

*** Sight lines and private /quiet spaces ***

THINGS WE COULD IMPROVE

* Anonymous high rise buildings – what are they for? *

*** Hostile city planning / hostile architecture ***

* Obstacles for partially sighted pedestrians *

*** The dialogue with Council ***

* Possible lack of crossover between art and business *

*** Scary roads/poor crossings ***

* Missed opportunities for public art *

*** Uncomfortable, uninviting, antisocial seating ***

* Not enough greening opportunities explored *

*** Waste lands could be recognised for their benefit to wildlife ***

* The types of shops in cultural quarter *

*** Clashing and plonking. No testing ***

* Too much homogeneity – look like Stoke, not just any other city! *

*** Not welcoming ***

* No focus to public realm *

*** Unclean city with a lack of maintenance ***

* The Intu façade *

*** Spaces aren't flexible enough ***

* No public art consultant *

*** Blank and boarded up windows and spaces ***

* Banners celebrating the city are too small and insignificant *

THINGS FOR THE REIMAGINED CITY

* An inner city orchard or tree nursery *

* **No street furniture – free streets** *

* Free wifi *

* **Green space** *

* Sculpture city *

* **Less rigid, more experimental art platforms** *

* A yearly speaking windows festival linking art and business - amazing window displays, maybe for Christmas, by artists *

* **More trees** *

* Art exchange – shop – upcycled reclaimed art to fund arts projects *

* **Benches and tables for sitting and talking and drinking tea** *

* More independent shops and workshop spaces *

* **Roving tourist information booth** *

* Manifesto flags *

* **Flower beds full of food plants** *

* Brighter colours *

* **Empty shops utilised** *

* Old empty buildings re-used for their original purpose *

* **Wildflowers – everywhere – little spaces** *

* Growing walls – plants – edible and otherwise *

* **Sculptures in Hanley Park – interactive** *

* Weekly/bi-monthly artist activity outside bus station *







**LEAD ARTIST
REFLECTIONS**

STRUGGLING TO FIND LIFE IN SHINY PUBLIC SPACES

“Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.”

Jane Jacobs

Can artists build a real relationship with city planners, regeneration professionals and perhaps most importantly, the people who use our streets? That was the question raised by *Beneath The Pavement*, a two day workshop for artists who want to work in public spaces.

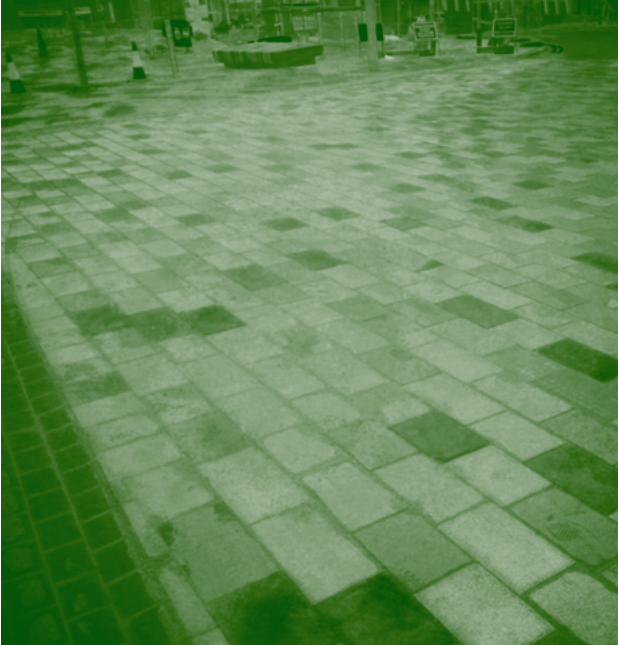
DAN THOMPSON

All cities are a jumble of older places, loosely connected, threaded together across the years but still holding onto their original identities. Stoke has held onto this ‘we’re not a city’ like an article of faith, but, coming from outside, it feels irrelevant. Chanting it, ‘we’re not a city, we’re not a city, we’re not...’ makes no difference. Stoke is a small-scale city, permeable and human-scaled. Nowhere does it overwhelm a person. The city twists, turns, tumbles up slight rises and through informal spaces (not formal squares, but wide and curving public spaces). This does, sometimes, make it difficult to navigate – it’s not a legible city centre, doesn’t move you to a big central space, doesn’t allow you to navigate by landmarks and statues.

The buildings are good, across the decades; there are beautiful proud Victorian commercial buildings, as you’d expect, but also some great mid-century modernism – the curved arches in an abandoned shopping centre, the fine typography on Tontine’s Buildings, the bold space-age fins of the BBC building.

These two periods – grand Victoriana, mid-20th century (Art Deco through to 60s Brutalism) track Stoke’s

industrial wealth. The Potteries which spread teapots, cups and saucers across the Empire, adapted well, post-1945, as both expressions of New Elizabethan optimism and as high-tech industry, manufacturing ceramics for electrics. The decline came later.



DAN THOMPSON

And that's a Stoke myth – that the big, empty sites mean Stoke's industry is dead. That's simply not true; it's moved on, there's no ripping coal and clay from the earth here today, but Spode, Emma Bridgewater, Portmeirion – these are still big names and they're still being produced. That's more major manufacturers, all well-known-names, than most British cities can muster. Be proud of your history – Minton, Clarice Cliff, Wedgwood, Susie Copper – for sure, but also be very proud of what you've got now.

Stoke's city centre is undergoing something of a transformation. It's being given a massive public realm

makeover. The work is well-intentioned, and is much better than what went before. If you compare the way the new layout gives the car less authority over roads, to areas in the city which are still waiting for improvement, it's going to change the way people use the city centre and deliver massive benefits.

But it still lacks focus, still lacks legibility and worst of all, includes too much Pointless Public Realm – space without purpose. The problem, really, is that while planners talk about 'vibrancy', and creating 'mixed use', and encouraging people to 'linger' – they also want to control space. So they try to plan out real vibrancy, allow only certain types of mixed use, and stop some people lingering. As a result, benches are split in two, to discourage rough sleeping, and seating is designed to be uncomfortable, so that teenagers and street drinkers don't linger too long. There's lots of space, but not in useful places, and not focused – empty space, waiting to be reclaimed and reused.

"There is a quality even meaner than outright ugliness or disorder, and this meaner quality is the dishonest mask of pretended order, achieved by ignoring or suppressing the real order that is struggling to exist and to be served."

Jane Jacobs

Stoke's future must be in these spaces being useful, being part of life, being filled again with bustle and life. At *Beneath The Pavement*, the artists I worked with made small interventions in other parts of the city; a series of stickers saying a polite 'thank you' for following instructional signs, a sign to 'Seize Your Space', a series of chalked cartoons and #chumberella, a shared and social space to keep the rain off (which, I reckon, should become an international movement).

STILL THINKING ABOUT THOSE BENCHES...



EMILY SPEED

After some time has passed following the two very intensive days of *Beneath the Pavement*, four experiences stick very firmly in my mind. The first is the courthouse visit. I loved this space so much and it triggered all kinds of ideas about theatre: the theatre of public office and of rituals and traditions. We need a performance as confirmation of something being true or official.

That wooden furniture!

It's a melancholy space too as you know that it is no longer truly necessary and it's style gives away the fact that it belongs firmly in another era. I knew immediately that this was the seed of an idea for me, above all other things we saw over the two days in Stoke-on-Trent.

The second was the silent walk in the full group. It was fascinating how everyone spread out to quite a standard distance apart, mainly in order to avoid catching anyone's

eye (a sure trigger for conversation). To absorb all those things that you feel compelled to share is tricky, but it has the effect of heightening your experience and observations and also acts as a filter; only those things that stick are the ones you end up sharing with others. I like how this allows the experience to become not only about the buildings, streets and signage, but about how people are in the space. At one point we stopped in a large square and it was fascinating that just the act of people standing apart and silent and looking all around was uncanny enough to draw attention.

I also found great value in the artists' and curator's talks. Jennie Syson in particular gave a very thoughtful and fascinating talk about her work on *Hinterland*, a project she created from 2006-2010.

The last and most important thing was the other participants. I had a group who got quite deep into the thinking around how to work in the public realm and we ended up using most of the time for discussion.

I had initially planned to be active and to make things. However, it actually felt a bit forced or rushed and although this might have been frustrating for those who wanted to see products, I really believe that this kind of art-making is a long(ish)-term exercise. I was especially struck by the several artists who mirrored my own feelings about being in this situation; a blank response (possibly seen as a kind of failure) and feelings of being overwhelmed, or dare I say oppressed, by the amount of visual and aural information we ingested.

But I liked (and admired) that other people did make something within the two days and that mix of approaches was a really useful and exciting thing to be around. I look forward eagerly to seeing the responses in September, but in the meantime, I am still thinking about those benches...

I LOOK ON WITH INTEREST TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS NEXT



A 5am start and a very early train to Stoke (via Bristol Parkway) saw me pitching up at AirSpace Gallery just after the strict 9.30am start we had been ordered to adhere to. Sure enough, introductions were underway and I had the ever-so-slightly awkward walk through the room to take my seat at the back. Previously, I had only ever been to Stoke on four occasions; twice to teach at the university (and anyone who knows the location of the university knows that on such a trip, you see the train station, a roundabout and the university, nothing more), once when I was living in Derby and Port Vale made it in to the LDV Vans Trophy Final (a mate in Derby was from Burslem and a loyal Vale fan, so we all trooped up to Stoke to get a coach to Cardiff with hundreds of other Vale fans, to watch Vale triumph over Brentford in a half-empty Millennium Stadium) and once when I was working for a brief time as a guitar roadie for the legend that is Bernie Tormé (not a name familiar to everyone, but the man that replaced Randy Rhoads in

Ozzy's touring band, whose first gig in that position was to a sold-out Madison Square Gardens. Needless to say, it wasn't quite the Gardens we were playing in Stoke). So, in short, my knowledge of Stoke was undeveloped.

What unfolded over the next two days was a genuinely inspiring series of talks, walks and activities. Having an outsider's perspective on the city-centre-rebranded-Hanley was, I believe, a useful thing. I was struck by the volume of independent shops. Sure, there are a lot of empty shops too and places that could do with a lick of paint, but that's certainly not unique to Hanley. The lack of chains screamed to me way more than the chains do themselves; over the last twenty years I've lived between Derby, Nottingham and Cardiff, all great cities in their own right, but at one point in Nottingham you were never more than 200 yards from a Subway. I guess what I was noticing could be argued to be a city that's yet to take off – many thriving independent scenes being born as a reaction against gentrification and chains, not simply there as the other stuff hasn't happened yet, but I liked the feel of it. I was also struck by the positivity of the artists involved in the workshop, particularly those based in Stoke itself. A current lack of provision and engagement wasn't discussed in negative terms, it was discussed as opportunity. The recent graduates I met have stuck around as they can see the chance to make things happen; I was reminded of a late-90s/early-00s Nottingham where cheap rents and cultural gaps were enough to make the likes of Reactor, Moot and Stand Assembly stick around, and the city has literally never looked back since. Of course, this was a fairly rarefied environment we were existing within for our 48 hours together, but one that had a tangible generosity and willingness to add to the fabric of the fast-changing city centre. I look on with interest to see what happens next.



**PARTICIPANT
ARTIST'S
PROPOSALS**

BROWNFIELD FLORA

Beneath the Pavement recognises the value of engaging artists in the rethinking of public space, bringing artists together to point out the opportunities, outline the uses of public space and draw out the particularities and peculiarities of place that make a city different to other cities.

For the past ten years or more this city has been full of gaps. Gaps where factories, houses, shops and people were.

Gaps are OK, but after a while gaps can start to wear you down, especially when the physical gaps are backed up by gaps in infrastructure, employment, or investment.

These days, things are changing. The gaps are starting to close. In particular, many of the Brownfield Sites around the city have begun to be developed.

Artists are fantastic at being resourceful, and recognising the potential of that which is usually overlooked, so where most people see a gap, a lack, a problem: an artist will see a space waiting to be filled, an opportunity to make something happen. For many of us, the Brownfield Sites of the city have been playgrounds, gardens, impromptu nature reserves.

This proposal is in recognition of the Brownfield Site, not as problem empty space, but in fact, as an important interim nature haven in the city centre; a home for wildlife. The abundance of Brownfield sites in the centre of Hanley has been a real opportunity for diverse ecologies of plants and small beasts to develop, as some sites have been empty for more than 10 years. Sites like The Smithfield Development, the much discussed new home for the city council, are being built on land which has stood relatively empty for some time. Now that these spaces are disappearing, in what is important and necessary development for the city, what will become of these fantastically diverse species?

Spending time in green spaces, however small, has been proven to improve the health and wellbeing of city dwellers, this is a call to developers to consider the existing ecologies, which are being disrupted or pushed out of cities, as something to coax and work with, and potentially to retain part of in the new plans, both for the benefit of the wildlife there, but also for the people set to occupy the spaces next.

THIS PROPOSAL IS TO:

- map the Brownfield sites in existence within the city centre today and document the plants and creatures there.
- commission a botanical illustrator; select a plant from each of the Brownfield Sites to be celebrated, and commission a series of beautiful Brownfield Flora Illustrations.
- collect seeds and samples of the plants from the sites. Connect with local growers in the city, and gather their support in propagating and cultivating these seeds, keeping them alive, and helping them to multiply.
- engage the developers in a conversation about the interim nature haven, and how it is being lost. Identify potential sites within the plans for a permanent Brownfield Flora Garden. Build a Brownfield Floral Garden to support maximum species.
- work with a pottery firm in the city to create a series of pottery ware which celebrates the Brownfield Flora, and advocates for a re-evaluation of the plants, spaces and skills in the city.

The project could be rolled out to form green spaces, creating a haven for people as well as creatures within the new development; but also, can be tiny: even as small as a window box or hanging basket.

Brownfield Flora is a celebration of the discarded, overlooked and unnoticed, and a recognition of potential.

NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND

“Beneath The Pavement...The Beach!” once rang out across a nation in turmoil, and despite our immediate landscape not being one of revolution - man is a political animal, and every move made is surely an assigned one.

We had come gathered in AirSpace to put our heads together to grow some ideas (through interaction) on how we could bring new light to a city that seemed remarkably confused about its current position in history. What once was, now wasn't, what could be, still unsure. Industry has bottomed out, but left us with notes on the dangers of wealth & prestige grown in a speciality. Stoke-on-Trent could be said to be entropy encapsulated, but I will stake my claim and stick my flag into the shifting sands that it is precisely because of this that there is a palpable potential here, and it has become apparent that it is not only I that believes this. Take up your shovels again, the time for digging graves has passed.

Being a resident of the place I found my assumptions were confronted at every turn and I was thrown into a new light regarding my surroundings, taken out of my usual way of living - a fresh start in a old town. I learnt to recognise my every step.

I noticed the horrifying amount of what *The Guardian* had recently come to term 'Hostile Architecture'; Architecture that was tokenistic - public Space designed to form the aesthetic of being for the people that was actually anything but. The sloped seats and skateboard stoppers actually shouted: “your interests & idiosyncrasies are not welcome here, you are to be uniform in your interaction and distant in your admiration”. The whole city had become an overbearing 'Keep Off The Grass' sign.

How do we engage the movers and shakers though? How do we reach out a hand covered in paint and demand that the glistening shine of an ironed suit accept it?

This has always been a problem, we appear to live different and terrifying lives to those unknowing. I felt like a hired outsider. A supposed disparity between those with power and us emerged. "They surely cannot think like we do?", rang a cautionary tone in discussions upon how to present our ideas. There is something wonderfully bizarre in the canyons between strangers and their numbered professions so we build a bridge, most carefully constructed, and hope the olive branch sticks.

"It must be immersive, they must be as enveloped as we are! They cannot see without experience so we must provide such a show." This I agree is paramount, everything must be done, they must feel embraced and safe. We have spent so long immersing and proving to our paradigms that we do in fact know what we're doing that to be suddenly confronted by another's world view and expected to understand its circumference can be daunting indeed.

The Artist's world is welcoming, you must only trust us.

After a careful consideration of any seeds of ideas we said our goodbyes, the task in hand that we must build a present for the city. Because that is it really, we are not forceful individuals bent on the egoistic reign of a desired space but members of a community who simply say 'that's weird, why is that..that?' and try to twist notions of space.

That existence might find itself anew under something akin to an optician's voice asking 'better or worse?' when given new perspectives of vision.

ARCHITECTURAL WINDOWS

For me, the most intriguing aspect of Stoke-on-Trent is the juxtaposition of architecture. From Modernist ruins, Brutalist towers and Victorian houses, Stoke possesses an abundance of disparate buildings. After re-discovering Hanley on the many walks throughout *Beneath the Pavement's* development workshop, I've become obsessed with the contrasting and conflicting buildings that inhabit the city.

As my current practice investigates the notion of anxiety within buildings, I felt that examining the tension of the conflicting architecture within the city would be an essential avenue to explore.

Walking around Hanley, I've noticed on numerous occasions the increasing amount of empty window spaces within unused shops. These window spaces are usually badly painted over or covered with decaying posters, which emphasise the lack of use within these buildings. I felt a temporary artistic intervention within these spaces could potentially improve the aesthetic of these shop frontages in a dynamic way, and could encourage a dialogue around the potential of these spaces, rather than continue their existence within a current state of disregard.

The artistic intervention I would like to occur within these spaces, would take the form of large photographic reproductions created utilising silkscreen printing. These works would depict the architecture within the city, drawing the public's attention to the buildings that occupy Stoke. I intend to use images of opposing buildings within each window space, to highlight the architectural conflict. To further evoke tension within the work, I intend to slightly

distort the imagery by displacing the prints, utilising mirroring and unusual viewpoints, which will proceed to make the depicted architecture appear jarring. The possibility of experimenting with colour within the prints by using bright, vivid colour could also evoke a further tension in the works.

Although the pieces could potentially be created through photographic printing due to my background in experimental analogue photography, the use of silkscreen printing allows for more control within the scale required, alongside the potential of introducing colour to the work. Creating the work allows for the opportunity to extend my printmaking knowledge, but would also allow for experimentation with large-scale silkscreen printing, with the possibility of creating a dynamic hand printed set of works.

The imagery will be created utilising 35mm photographic film, which I will then proceed to develop and create prints from. These prints will be digitally scanned and sent to a large format printer who will create acetate prints, which will then be used as the positive to burn into a large screen. I intend to build a large silk screen to accommodate the size required for the windows. The images will then be printed onto large-scale paper and will then be mounted within the window space.

The overall risks involved with creating the work are low. However as I've not created large silkscreen prints on this scale before, there is a possibility that the prints could be unsuccessful, however with preparation and research, this is very unlikely to occur.

MURALS FOR DISUSED SPACES

My practice revolves around sculpture and painting. My personal work is involved with aspects of nature as well as pattern based imagery. I heavily engage myself with the process in which I make my work, I enjoy using and exploring various techniques to create various structures and finishes. I use a wide range of materials such as wood, clay, and resin to acrylic paint, spray paint and paint pens to create mainly abstract paintings and sculptures.

Recently I painted a Piano as part of *Play Me, I'm Yours* hosted by Appetite. There were a number of pianos, painted by artists and placed in various locations across Stoke-on-Trent. The piano I painted is situated on the band stand in Burslem Park. This is a great example of how my art and other artists work can help people connect with whatever it exists on and its location. In this case a piano, the art on it potentially draws people to the piano and encourages engagement with it and the people of their community, as well as bringing new life to the bandstand.

As with everyone's proposals, mine aims to hopefully discuss some potential ideas for change, big or small to Stoke's diverse environment. Upon visiting the city centre with AirSpace Gallery I noticed various locations that interested me, but like any other time in any other place, the derelict spaces are what always shout out to me the most.

Artists can help bring about great change, even if temporary. Art can help the city move forward and help people reconnect with their environment. Buildings such as the old shopping centre don't have to be remembered by the people of Stoke as a dirty, disused and barren looking space as it is at the moment and will do until work is carried out to redevelop it, which could take some time.

I am interested in helping pump some vibrancy into spaces by painting disused walls to make small scale sculptures that can be integrated into spaces, all of a temporary nature to re-energise certain areas in the city for some time until greater plans are made. I noticed some people still pass through the old shopping centre, possibly as a short cut. This is an area of particular interest of mine and I can see room for lots of artists to make temporary works there.

The benefits of art in disused spaces run endlessly for both artists and residents. It allows free space for artists to work, develop their ideas as well as making work for the public to engage with and most importantly making their home a more vibrant and safe place in which to commute and relax in. There are many successful case studies of artists all over the world creating murals on disused walls to not only connect the people to the art and their environment, but also gain tourism and a new flow of energy to an area that was once disregarded.

HI^{JACKED}STREETST1

Simply, this is a suggestion by (*h*)edge kelektiv that the empty shops in the high street should be offered on a short term / temporary basis to artists (which could become a permanent subsidised arrangement if proved successful). This would create a vibe in the high street - attracting interest from the public and business alike.

AN ARTIST'S HIGH STREET

This is not a proposal for a 'pop-up' shop. It is a suggestion to appropriate the presentation and branding of thriving shops (such as charity shops, pawnshops, shops, rental shops, gold shops, newsagents; nail bars, hairdressers, record shops etc). Artists will be offered the opportunity of becoming *HighjackedStreetST1* traders and commissioned to temporarily occupy and run empty sites in the style of a high street shop; they will be invited to do this imaginatively, to produce goods and to use alternative ways of trading such as swapping, exchange, and invented *HijackedStreetST1* currency. This is a flexible project, which could be run for one day or over a period of time and in one shop or in several.

[H]EDGE KELEKTIV

RATIONALE/WHY

- To create a point for public consultation
- To conduct some action research on the possibilities of art in the public realm
- To create a vibe and revitalize empty retail space
- To celebrate enterprise
- To generate funds for art projects

The aim of *HighjackedStreetST1* is to attract the public by recreating a familiar and popular environment in a magical way with the idea of illustrating the value of local entrepreneurs and traders, helping people understand why

and how these shops thrive; realise how important it is to keep local money in the local economy; and question how to harness these successes for further cultural growth.

POTENTIAL METHODS/ACTIONS

FUNDING MODEL:

- Investigating sale/exchange in the style of Pound shops, charity shops, betting / pawnshop.
- Using Art works / up-cycling / goods and services.

CULTURALLY ENRICHING HIGH STREET OUTLETS:

- Investigating the impact and value of non-retail environments on the high street as for example with the growing trend to put non-shops on the high street such as gyms; arts spaces; information hubs.
- Using inventive alternative ideas for a high street presence

CONSULTATION HUB:

- Investigating conversation and discussion as consultation and playing with these models.
- Using Micro pub/bar and or café/ coffee shop and quality/healthy/ cheap or free food and refreshments to bring people together.

ARTIST PUBLIC REALM PROJECTS:

- Investigating strategies.
- Using commissioning to fund street performance; events; site specific art works; work shops for the city; public realm areas and for the community.

HighjackedStreetST1 will create a focus for energy, interaction, and involvement. It will emphasize how important variety is to a thriving high street and highlight the fact that shopping is more than just the act of purchasing something. It's a chance to meet new people, learn things, bump into friends, solve problems; it's a vital part of civic health.

CULTIVATE

cul-ti-vate [kuhl-tuh-veyt] verb (used with object)

1. *prepare land for crops*
2. *grow plant*
3. *loosen soil*
4. *nuture something*
5. *promote or improve growth by labour and attention*
6. *develop acquaintance with somebody*
7. *make somebody cultured*
8. *produce by culture: to cultivate a strain of bacteria.*
9. *develop or improve by education or training*

(h)edge keletiv proposes a vision of utilising and harnessing the uniquely diverse brownfield eco-site. Our model highlights the great social and cultural value of fostering these wilderness sites for the people and city of Stoke-on-Trent.

[H]EDGE KELEKTIV

CULTIVATE...

We propose an 'Eco-Botanical project' consisting of 'geodomes' based on designs of the American architect and engineer Richard Buckminster-Fuller. Each geo-dome creates a micro-climate, in which to grow collections of plants. There could be a wildlife dome; a food-growing dome; a herbarium, new styles of domes could be developed as needed.

A PLACE TO VISIT

We envisage it as a city garden for the people of Stoke-on-Trent and its visitors: it would offer a refuge; a sanctuary; a place for the community. It would be for action, education, exchange, outreach, research and art. As an 'attraction' it could give the project one of its streams of self-funding.

BENEFITS

- Cultivate plants, wildlife, creativity and community.
- A site for growing food, producing seeds and plants to: share, give away, exchange and sell.
- An important investment in civic wellbeing.
- Entrepreneurial partnership working with the local business and with national organisations such as the Eden Project.
- Community Partnerships - working with

community groups, schools, Staffordshire University, Stoke-on-Trent Council and Appetite.
• Produce plants and planting systems for the city's high streets and public realm areas.

ACTIVITIES

- Education / Exchange/Outreach:
Workshops / events; seminars; screenings.
- Research
Self-building and sustainability in cities; protection of plant and wildlife in cities; water systems; eco systems.
- Art
Participatory workshops / events / performances; commissions and residencies; artist and scientist collaboration.

WHY CULTIVATE?

Inspired by the Eden Project, built on old clay pits, has transformed the local economy of St Austell; this project would similarly contribute to showcase Stoke as a 'future' city; grounded in its industrial heritage but thriving on the natural resources, creativity and vision of its inhabitants. At the core of this vision is the drive towards self-sustaining enterprises. The project legacy offers life-transforming experiences in terms of creativity, community, health and well being, whilst developing a model for self-financing projects.

PHASED PROJECT:

The model is scalable and aims to be ambitious, starting with pilot projects, involving participatory workshops to design and imagine how the domes could look and be used. The next phase then involves building test domes in a public space, as a form of public art, in order to then develop areas of a brownfield space.

STRUCTURE AND FINANCE:

A not-for profit, self-sustaining, participant led enterprise. It would seek to build partnerships wherever possible, working with guidance / an advisory panel. The initial set up phase would involve seed funding, but financial independence would be central to it's development and future plans. Its ecological aims will be key to all it's activities. It will aim to use as many donated and in-kind resources as possible.

BREATHING SPACES

JANE HOWIE

Humans in this continuously connected, frenetic 21st century, lead complicated, busy stress filled lives: “running all the time to stay in the same place”. Green, wild spaces where birdsong and the hum of bees can be heard above the background buzz of the city; where flowers and aromatic plants scent the air and delight the eye can act as an anodyne to this stress. Green sanctuary spaces in the city would allow a space, a pause in the busyness, giving our poor over stimulated brains somewhere to empty themselves of the clutter and let creativity and stillness in. The *Breathing Spaces* proposal is to identify, preserve and augment the current pockets of green in the city centre, making places where people can retreat from the bustle of the city and connect with wildlife and greenery. Also to provide artworks linking and pointing to the sanctuary spaces.

Often in my practice as an artist I have focused on human activities and the traces they leave. Themes have included loss, abandonment, displacement of populations, the intrusion of human activity into the landscape and how we affect the world around us. For *Breathing Spaces*, I would like instead to revisit experiential art. I am interested in how the spaces we inhabit affect us, how the architecture and environment we surround ourselves with shapes how we think and feel, as well as our health and wellbeing, and our creativity. I want to explore the ideas of sanctuary, retreat, and paradise, and the possibilities for creating these experiences in the city centre.

The project would be completed in consultation and collaboration with stakeholders such as local residents, businesses and relevant official bodies, in order that

it has a long term future for the provision of enriching experiences for the inhabitants and users of the city centre. My aim is also to incorporate features unique to the immediate area into the structures and artworks augmenting the existing spaces, providing visible links and references to the past history of each area.

Because I particularly want the project to be a collaborative one with the surrounding stakeholders and to respond to the unique features of each site, the outcomes in terms of the shape and content of the spaces and the form of the artworks and structures will not be known at the start of the process, but developed during it. Also the specific areas to become breathing spaces will depend on permissions from the relevant official body and buy-in from stakeholders both in terms of available budget and of people willing to become involved in giving their time and creative input.

I have used the area round the edges of the old bus station, currently Birch Terrace Car Park as an example of an area which might be turned into a sanctuary space. From the photos it can be seen that there are several mature trees and bushes that can be preserved, also plants such as clover, buttercups, and thistles. There is some existing walling that could be repaired and augmented with screening such as hazel or willow panels to provide enclosed spaces where only green can be seen. Other walls could be removed to provide access into the area or replaced with a feature such as a pergola, modelled on the old bus station over which climbing plants could be grown. The sketched plan imagines how the space could be filled with wildflower areas, sheltered seating, a hard path through and a bird watching area.

THE BETHESDA SOAPBOX

(A RUMINATION ON A PLATFORM FOR CITY VOICES)

'I exhort you to consider...cast off the yoke of bondage, and recover liberty'

Or, No.1 The Proposition

In a gentle spot, a place of calm in the centre of our city stretches a garden in which stand three plinths. The first supports a memorial to the dead. The second a statue of mother and child. But the third plinth, the middle one, quiet and bare, stands empty. Whatever the reasons for this long served vacancy, the empty plinth, cocooned by benches and grass, murmurs with potential. In the delicately elevated concrete square we have something waiting: a platform, and in the open area surrounding it: a place for an audience, an assembly. The spot cries out to the city's speakers and to the city's listeners to occupy it.

KAT BOON

I propose establishing this empty plinth as Hanley's speaker's corner. Through a programme of assemblies, issues of local and / or national significance, from the serious to the whimsical, will be posed. Victorian style pamphlets will circulate the city to inform its people of the gathering. On the date, artists, from performance poets to comedians and storytellers like masters of ceremonies, will open proceedings and stimulate the debate through their individual artistic discourse. Through play we will be encouraged to think big. The artists will then pose a single question. Knowledgeable speakers from the community will be invited to proselytise to the gathering upon this and stimulate a dialogue within the crowd. The plinth will then be opened to the assembly to respond.

'We hold these truths to be self evident...'

Or, No.2 The Rationale

Our city centre, and Bethesda Gardens in particular, is at times surprisingly lacking in people. But what are city centres for if not people? With the erection of Smithfield we can anticipate this space evolving into a thoroughfare up to the shopping district. Rather than categorising this inevitable increase in footfall only for it's commercial value, there is opportunity to explore the other purposes city centres serve. In demarcating a space to assemble we

encourage city centre inhabitants to use a public space for alternative reasons: for political, social, or artistic expression; for protest; for rumination; for connecting with fellow passersby. At these assemblies artists will encourage those voices of the city centre which are often unheard to have a moment of address.

A daily diet of social media has saturated our lives with opinions and beliefs. The anonymity of online lives can encourage fundamentalist thinking. This alternative speaker's corner mediated by artists, however, returns debate to the human level and introduces into the onward march of argument the freedom to simply pose questions of the world, something which artists do so well. The exchange of view is personal and immediate. Opinion becomes malleable as speaker and listener stand face to face, occupying a shared space.

'Soldiers! in the name of democracy, let us all unite!'

Or, No.3 How To Make It Happen

An assembly could be a temporary intervention initially, but if successful become regular through the public's volition. Selection of the issue to debate would be the starting point. The proximity of the new *Sentinel* newspaper offices could offer a unique channel to discover this. Artists with work that relates to the issue and speakers with a specialist interest would be selected from the local community. A pamphlet then created to declare the date of the assembly and the order of debate, in a style playfully evocative of the spirit of historical public protest, e.g. that of the Chartists or Suffragettes.

As Master of Ceremonies the artist would relish the chaos of multiple voices gathered, but also ensure the structure necessary to make discussion productive, e.g. keeping speeches to an allotted time. As the crowd may be reluctant to take the plinth or challenge the authority of speakers, artists would devise ways of engaging them, e.g. encouraging them to write down and read out a brief idea, or creating smaller groups of debate around the plinth.

This project would require mainly people power and passion but in posing the right questions this should not be difficult to rouse. However, on a very practical note: a banner under which the assembly may gather, a microphone, and perhaps an umbrella too, should it rain!

OBSERVATIONS AND IDEAS

MORNA LOCKIE-ANRIG

The opportunity to listen to, and experience the thinking behind and descriptions from professional artists who had experience of working in the public realm, was fantastic. It far exceeded my expectations. It was a privilege and a motivation to live up to the experiences *Beneath the Pavement* was offering us.

The variety of ways that we encountered the city was enlightening: guided tours from specialists who were knowledgeable about spaces seeking artists to enhance / work with businesses and buildings; magical mystery tours offering us secret snooping time; blind tours feeling the uneven ground; the input from local onlookers, and the sounds of the city.

We walked in the day, the evening, the sun and the rain. We discussed, documented, took notes and contemplated in silence. We repeated walks, but each one was different and each time we noticed something new; a space that called out for the limelight, a corner that sought for a cosy meeting place to encourage conversation.

I tried to think empathetically, about what I would want in the city, after observing and speaking to local residents. I also explored ideas for bringing the public together and encouraging involvement in the building, advertisement, and arts of the city.

A FEW OF THE THINGS WHICH STRUCK ME:

- The signage around the city seemed dismal, old, sometimes incorrect, uninspiring and not very engaging. I spent time talking to the locals about their favourite spaces around the city, areas they would recommend, and places which needed a bit more TLC in order to be public friendly.

- The lack of places / events which could engage a range of audiences and people.
- A lack of creative projects advertised in the streets and shops.
- Patches of green - weeds, brown spaces, overflowing guttering, sporadic flowerbeds, and trees.

SOME IDEAS WITH A VIEW TO INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY:

- A City Hanging Basket Competition: miniature hanging installations to encourage colour and pride in the centre, this could be sponsored by local farms, flower businesses, and recycling organisations - reusing containers creatively to create more interesting displays.
- A Monthly “Reclaim an Empty Space” Event: advertised well, possibly utilising different skills from the public. The public could propose the event they want to take place and take turns in designing posters / flyers.
- Outdoor Cinema: bring camping chairs and watch a film together, projected against a blank wall. Alternatively this could be done indoors on an interior wall with astro-turf on the floor to create a soft place to lay picnic blankets.
- Every Man’s Sign: a competition or a commission to create locally inspired signs which highlight the general public’s favourite places - this could create a totem-like-pole as a focal point in the central square of the city, a point that brings the six towns together by naming the best food shops, pubs, cultural sights, places to sit, and entertainment.

WHITEWASHED: STOKE

*"You can whitewash our windows, but you can't
whitewash our creativity!"*

Anonymous

Over 20% of shops in Hanley (Stoke-on-Trent's main shopping area) are empty. A lot of these shops get that very familiar white swirly pasting some of us call whitewashing. This always looks like it was done in a rush by a landlord who had his teenage children (or mates who should know better) stood behind waiting to scratch in the odd body part or rude word.

Whitewash, sometimes known as limewash, is a low cost painting material (also used in cooking apparently) mixed from hydrated lime and water. In other countries it is also used to protect young tree bark from the heat of the sun, but in this country we mainly see it on the emptied shops of our high streets. On the whole it is a sign of misfortune or inactivity.

To the eyes of an artist, whitewash put onto a window can create a plethora of possibilities in mark making and symbolism. It swirls, splashes, drips, and can be etched into and rubbed out. In the hands of say, ten artists, a row of empty shops would become a low cost makeshift street gallery. This would turn an everyday material socially associated with recession, loss, and dormancy (or greenhouse windows) into a dynamic, economic, engaging medium. In the hands of artists it would hide, reveal, tease, envision, taunt, distract, confuse, seduce, and even celebrate. Due to the low cost of the materials involved (limewash, Windowlene, or white emulsion), the project would be economical too, with the main finance going to fund people doing the work.



NICK DAVIES



OPEN AIR DIGITAL GALLERY

The developing public realm in Stoke-on-Trent creates a unique opportunity to incorporate arts interventions as a way to enhance and animate the city centre.

I am interested in creating a digital installation that would provide a potentially ongoing and changing series of digital works by artists responding to a varied programme of briefs. Some responses might be short (minutes, hours or days), others longer (weeks or months). The intention is to create an inspiring range of temporary works that becomes, over time, a key visitor attraction while exposing residents and shoppers to art and its power to positively transform the city experience. Whereas *Art Everywhere* is a temporary manifestation of famous (or less famous) works of art in cities around the UK for one month, the *Open Air Digital Gallery* could be a permanent feature that creates a unique opportunity for artists at various stages of their career to display their work. It would help give locals an exposure to art, provide a strong magnet for arts audiences, and play a part in attracting new artists and students to live, work, and stay in the city.

PHIL RAWLE

The visual is a blue sky solution. The concept could be piloted with smaller screens in a few locations.

HANGING GARDENS

One of my key interests as an artist is landscape - both natural and fabricated. On the first day of the Beneath the Pavement workshop we were all asked to add an intervention onto a large map of the city centre. I noted that there were a lot of requests for more 'green' space in various locations. Later in the day Steve Ralphs from the city council landscape department indicated that there were difficulties in planting trees due to the intensity of underground pipes and cables. So there has been little

provision for green space in the city. I became interested in considering how this might be addressed. How might trees and plants be introduced without interfering with the underground infrastructure?

Logic suggests that any planting needs to be above ground, and an image came to me of a tree impossibly floating above a pavement. Impossible, but perhaps there's a way of making it possible. This is the concept - to create unusual green space additions in the public realm that float or hang from existing or new structures. Some years ago I designed and built a series of boxes, filled with soil and planted with grass and flowers which formed a moveable garden. They could be shifted around to form different configurations. They could be raised and lowered. Similarly, the *Hanging Gardens* could be pop-up, mobile gardens travelling around the city.

PICCADILLY GABLE ENDS

PHIL RAWLE

For a number of years I have noticed that as you drive or walk up Broad Street towards the city centre, there are a set of ugly gable ends at the right-hand side of the bottom of Piccadilly. I think this is ripe for an intervention that could make a more positive and memorable gateway feature into the city centre.

While I would welcome the opportunity to work on this myself, I propose that an open call might be made with a brief and budget, to widen the scope of possibilities that such a location might create.

The visual included is a simple intervention and a starting point only. I would want to liaise with local people to explore what approach they would like to see before arriving at a finished design. I am interested in using different materials such as reflective and / or luminous paints in order that the work is also visible at night.

SOMETHING NEW TO REMEMBER

A live performance in the new city centre featuring a giant puppet. The aim is to create a spectacle in the new public spaces in Hanley, changing the way people think about them.

During the *Beneath the Pavement*, I had the opportunity to hear some of the thoughts and feelings of local people in terms of what they would like to see from artists working in their city. It seems that art created in and about Stoke-on-Trent tends to focus on the potteries and the ceramic tradition of the city, despite that tradition being largely gone, and meaning little (if anything) to the inhabitants of Stoke-on-Trent too young to have known it. This is summed up in the sentiments of one local, who claimed: 'We're sick of remembering the old; we want something new to remember'.

I plan to pursue this idea of remembering something new by creating a new local mythology, inspired by cryptozoological sightings. Mysterious creatures and monsters rarely fail to capture the public imagination, and inevitably develop deep associations with the locations they were spotted, as is the case with the Loch Ness Monster, or the respective Beasts of Bodmin, Dartmoor, and Dean. Most importantly, the sighting of a cryptid fundamentally alters the narrative of a location, and it is this idea I wish to explore.

As such, I will create a spectacle that feels ancient, perennial and familiar, through a series of artistic interventions in the city centre featuring a giant puppet – an iconic boar, lifted

straight from the City of Stoke-on-Trent coat of arms. The Beast of Hanley. It will simultaneously be an exploration of the iconography and narratives of Stoke-on-Trent, and a celebration of the new city centre as a cultural space.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN

In practice, this will be a live theatrical performance, combining acting and puppetry. Over a series of dates (provisionally three), including day and evening sessions, the Beast will appear in the city centre to tour the renovated pedestrian areas of Hanley, interact with the local population, to impress and entertain. The puppet will require one or more operators, and three or more operatives will be needed for crowd control, for a minimum operating team of four.

THE PUPPET

The Beast will be approximately eight feet tall and twelve feet in length. It will be constructed largely from lightweight cane and willow, and covered with a fabric that allows the operator(s) to see outside the puppet. Fine motor control (such as mouth, ear, and tail movement) will use bicycle brake cables, allowing the entire puppet to be operated from the base of the 'neck'. Adjustable-force gas struts will be installed in key locations maintain smooth movement across the structure and to take some weight off the operator. Multiple discreet wheels may also be necessary for this same purpose – this will become clear in the testing phases of the project. The puppet will be designed to separate into seven pieces for ease of transport – four limbs, two torso segments, and the head.

#CHUMBRELLA

Where do you go to meet new people? Maybe a pub, a dating site, an evening class, or an event? Maybe you don't have the time to commit to other activities beyond the daily demands of work and family, leaving you with few opportunities to meet new people outside existing networks.

Our high street is full of people, everyday thousands of stories, experiences, and perspectives pass us by, but we have few real opportunities to interact and exchange. Blinkered by the need to complete our shopping lists before our parking tickets run out we fail to notice that the high street can offer so much more, the space and freedom to connect with people that share our city.

#chumbrella is a bold gesture, a welcome invitation and a shared understanding that real human connections are vital in creating vibrant, safer, and cohesive public spaces. By carrying a *#chumbrella* you are offering temporary shelter to someone walking in your direction, standing in a queue, or at a bus stop. It's a place of mutual understanding, a common ground that you can enter and leave at any time. A two minute walk could be the start of a friendship, a small act of kindness could mean a great deal to you, or your 'chum'. Through the accumulative effect of hundreds, even thousands of small acts, *#chumbrella* aims to challenge and improve peoples' experience of public spaces by making them more social and welcoming places to be.

The preceding hash-tag (#) is to enable online documentation through social media. A virtual record accessible to anyone to view and share their *#chumbrella* stories.



SARAH NADIN

THE IMAGINED FOREST

In *The Imagined Forest* I am proposing myself as an artist in residence for Stoke-on-Trent City Centre. My aim is to look at the trees located around the new Smithfield development and to envision a future for trees in the area. I will explore the relationship between trees and the surrounding people and buildings. My previous work focuses on the spaces where wilderness meets the urban. I use natural materials and other things found on site to make and inspire my practice. I use a range of media in my work including ceramics, print, and photography, and have experience in the public realm through work on art trails and performance.

SAM MACE

RATIONALE

We depend upon trees for our very existence yet city developments seem to place trees low on the agenda. They can be seen as window dressing, easily cut down and replaced. Many trees take years to fully mature whereas comparatively modern city developments can comprise of quick fixes and short term goals. This creates an interesting juxtaposition. In the past, trees covered most of the land and were revered not just for the immediate food, shelter, shade, and firewood that they provided, but they were considered to be sacred. Native trees have a wealth of associated folklore.

Stoke-on-Trent has beautiful parks and moorland views yet I have noticed that the city centre is lacking in trees and green growth. I wonder how long the young trees will last, why the non-native species have been chosen and what benefits they have to biodiversity in the city. I am interested in what the trees in the city centre mean to the people who live and work alongside them, if anything.

What stories do people have about the trees in their city and what hopes and visions do they have? I really believe that trees are important to the health and well-being of the city and would like to look at ways to elevate their status now and in the long term. In the meantime, how can we fill the space of the absent forest?

PRACTICALITIES

For the residency I would spend time in the city centre observing and documenting the trees. I would identify key people or organisations such as the city council tree officer, or landscaping team, to gather information and explore opportunities for working collaboratively.

My research would result in a body of art work that could include a series of interventions or lead to a larger scale final outcome. My method of working means that I prefer to leave this open and allow a response to emerge from what I find. I can make some suggestions, however. One would be to map and track the trees and create some sort of map or guide to encourage people to interact and notice the trees (visual, audio, and/or virtual). Another may be to create some kind of moveable 'tree lab' from which to study the trees, such as a den or stool made from scavenged materials associated with the trees. It may be an activity or event linked with the things a particular tree produces. For example, serving acorn coffee by an oak or burning incense made from rowan berries. The trees could act as a stage to host an evening event using lighting, either hung or projected. These are just a taste of the sort of thing that I would like to bring to fruition given the opportunity.

FROM US, TO YOU, AND BACK AGAIN

From Us, to You, and Back Again is a participatory storytelling project that will develop a dialogue between families in Stoke-on-Trent and professional children's authors and see the creation of a series of family-friendly short stories about the city centre area. It will encourage people, both those that regularly enter and use the city centre and those that might be new to it, to view it from a different perspective.

SARAH RICHARDSON

If we get used to a certain place, maybe walking through it every day on our way to work, we can sometimes stop really looking at it. Yet if something happens that encourages us to look again, gives us permission to stop and stare, to pause and wonder, we can find surprises in even the most familiar of places. Taking the time to really look at a place from a different perspective can change our opinion of it and revive our appreciation of it. This project aims to encourage families from Stoke-on-Trent to re-look at their city centre area and uncover (or re-discover) some hidden treasures within it. It also aims to provide people that are new to the city centre with a refreshing and playful way of engaging with it.

Up to six groups of participants, children and their families, will be recruited through Stoke-on-Trent primary schools. During a series of participatory drama and storytelling workshops groups of families

from Stoke-on-Trent will explore and re-examine their city centre area. Experienced practitioners will facilitate the development and collection of participants' thoughts, ideas and personal stories about the city centre. Each group's material will then be packaged up and 'gifted' to a professional children's author whose brief will be to use the material as a stimulus for a short (to be read in under 5 minutes) family-friendly story. These stories will then be gifted back to the people of Stoke-on-Trent via a team of actors who over the course of a weekend will perform the stories in the city centre locations that inspired them to anybody that wants to hear them. The stories will also be recorded in booklet form, with a map illustrating the location of the 'hidden' treasures that inspired them, and in an online format. This will ensure that the stories remain accessible beyond the duration of the project (and beyond the city geographically) and enable people to follow their own story trail around the city centre, reading or listening to (via an audio download) the stories in-situ, whenever they want.

SARAH RICHARDSON

BENEATH THE PAVEMENT THERE'S A BEACH.

Every city is made up of its smaller and sometimes secret spaces. These are the places that make the city have character and help the people of the city not become overwhelmed by the apathy of capitalism and its fickleness.

The key is to grab these spaces while they're still available otherwise they run the danger of becoming used for something mundane.

SIOBHAN MCALEER

In Hanley these spaces are ever present and are crying out to be utilised. They present themselves quietly, waiting to be noticed, to be used. The flat roof of a building (as a stage), or a second story window (as a frame), an alley (for a pop up festival), or a traffic island (for a garden).

These places are not spaces we pay a lot of attention to. We pass them by and ignore their potential.

I would like to reference here Melbourne, Australia as a city that is full of secret spaces. Places that feel private and secluded, where you can catch your breath and often find some solidarity.

The alleyways in Melbourne are galleries for visual artists, and the roofs of buildings are beaches, and at cinemas the car parks are bars at night time, made up of storage containers and milk crates, beautified by fairy lights and laughter.

All it takes is a bit of gall! The people of Stoke certainly aren't lacking in that!

Dealing with the hustle and bustle of our busy lives has become an intricate day to day, weekly and monthly routine, fitting in shopping, emailing, banking, eating, where and when we can. There isn't often a lot of time left for (what I personally deem) the most important things - playing, loving, and learning.

The secret spaces in the city are the perfect venues for these activities.

There is an element of fun about having a storage container that becomes a bar on a car park. Something that becomes something it wasn't before - and I'm sure somewhere we relate to this - and learn from it the aspiration to be something more than what we appear to be.

There are lots of ways we can make time for these important things without making us feel jarred or out of sorts. We just need them to be subtle, but exciting.

By using spaces that exist and by encouraging the public to use and look at familiar surroundings differently there are interesting things that happen. The aim of the outcome would be to re-establish love and positive views about an area.

Hanley has every potential to become a city full of hidden getaways and secret spaces.

We just need to take a look beneath the pavement.



In recent times cities all over the world have been losing their identity, opting to design public spaces which all look and feel the same...

The City Centre Partnership of Stoke-on-Trent doesn't want that for their city, and recognising the opportunity to think differently, invited artists to share their creative practice and experience to find an alternative approach for the rethinking of the City Centre. This artist book documents the Beneath the Pavement programme, as commissioned by Appetite and The City Centre Partnership, and delivered by AirSpace Gallery.

These proposals and thoughts were developed from a relatively small monetary investment, with a fantastic group of artists, working for just two days in reimagining the city centre.

This document acts as a testament and a taster for what might be possible: Imagine what could be done with a more significant investment of both time and money.

THANKS

We'd like to express our thanks to Appetite's Gemma Thomas for her vision in identifying the need for this programme, and to the events speakers including, Steve Ralphs and Jennie Syson. To the CPP's Jonathan Bellamy and Rachel Rhodes, for touring us around the target area and to The Glebe Hotel for supplying the delicious food that kept us all going. And finally to the artists for their hard work, energy and commitment.

BIOGRAPHIES

Appetite is an Arts Council England funded programme which aims to get more people in Stoke-on-Trent to experience and be inspired by the arts. The Appetite programme is led by the New Vic Theatre in partnership with B Arts, Brighter Futures, Partners in Creative Learning and Staffordshire University.

www.appetitestoke.co.uk

Stoke-on-Trent City Centre Partnership was established in 2006 and is an independent group of local businesses who champion and advocate on behalf of the city centre. The partnership has dedicated and active members who are influential in making change happen within the city centre.

Anna Francis is an artist whose practice examines private histories, public space and civic languages; using forms of intervention, drawing, mapping, performance, consultation and photography to investigate the impact that artists can have on their environments.

www.annafrancis.blogspot.com

Emily Speed's interests lie in the relationship between people and buildings and her work explores the body and its relationship to architecture - how a person is shaped by the buildings they have occupied and how a person occupies their own psychological space.

www.emilyspeed.co.uk

S Mark Gubb lives and works in Cardiff and works across a range of media incorporating sculpture, video, sound, installation and performance. The subjects for his work are drawn from the social and political culture he grew up in.

www.smarkgubb.com

Dan Thompson is a social artist and writer living in Margate. His work is about people and places. He is interested in the creation of social capital, in abandoned or underused spaces, and in DIY approaches to art, culture and social action.

www.mrdanthompson.wordpress.com

BENEATH THE PAVEMENT

AIRSPACE GALLERY, STOKE-ON-TRENT
27TH - 28TH JUNE & 24TH SEPTEMBER 2014

Full documentation of Beneath the Pavement, written by the participant artists can be found on the AirSpace Gallery Blog.

LEAD ARTISTS

Anna Francis
Dan Thompson
Emily Speed
S Mark Gubb

PHOTOGRAPHY

The artists, Glen Stoker and Jenny Harper

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www.the-tuber.co.uk

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