

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REVIEW

‘THE ILLUMINATING JOURNEYS PROJECT’

- * Outcome review of 6 creative community workshops held with various community groups in Walthamstow over August and September 2023.
- * Sessions run by Greenaway & Greenaway, Wood Street Walls and Vasundhara Shankari and attended by mural artists, Static.
- * In total approx 70 participants of different demographics, ages and abilities were included in the community engagement workshops.
- * Outcomes included conversations about the meanings and relevance of specific words; it included collage, pattern making and colour choices; it looked at journeys and thought about how to navigate shared spaces through the creative process.
- * As an outcome, Greenaway & Greenaway will refer to the way different participants responded to tasks of filling the shapes and the words with patterns and colour, allowing the body of experimentation to help inspire how the mural designs, negative space and projected patterns will work together.
- * This document will be shared with the mural artists, along with the fundamental shapes and pattern inspiration packs, as part of the briefing process. Allowing them to get a feel for different inspirations and ideas that were present during the sessions.
- * The workshops were a way for members of the public to engage with the concept and an opportunity for people to come together in a positive and creative way feel part of the project. It allowed residents to start interacting with the murals with agency and inspiration, giving people a chance to talk to their neighbours and gets hands on experience with the artistic technique of collage.

PARTICIPATING COMMUNITIES

Lea Bridge Road Library - over 30 participants

Working with the Participation and Sanctuary Team this session focused on migrant, refugee and asylum seeker communities based in or with connections to the Leyton area. The drop in session was predominantly children under 12 in an informal environment.

Forest View Care Home - 12 participants

A formal environment with elderly residents this session included verbal and non verbal participants, some with dementia.

Walthamstow Trades Hall - 1 participants

This was an open call out session, predominantly focused on Cairo Road residents but also open to other residents of the Central/Hoe Street Area. Ciaro Road residents that were unable to attend the session were invited to other workshops and contacted G&G directly.

Priory Court Community Centre - 15 participants

This session combined a mixture of older and younger participants from different demographics but centred around those living in the Priory Court area.

Rose & Crown Red Room - 12 participants

Focusing on the idea of creating agency in marginalised groups, this session was offered to women and girls with the aim of fostering safer streets through participation and inclusion. The workshop was attended by a mix of adults and children under 10.

Hatherley Mews Businesses - 6 participants

Session specifically involving Hatherley Mews Businesses to discuss the words and elements for the mural on Hatherley mews. This session was a discussion rather than creative session and sits outside of the other community engagement response as the final design is specifically for hatherley mews and doesn't affect the other mural developments. *Feedback from session at the end of this document.

LEA BRIDGE LIBRARY

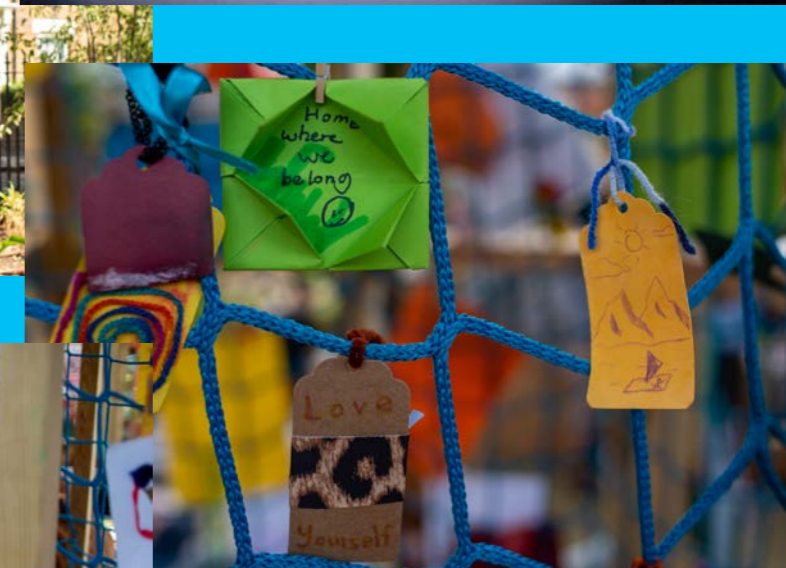
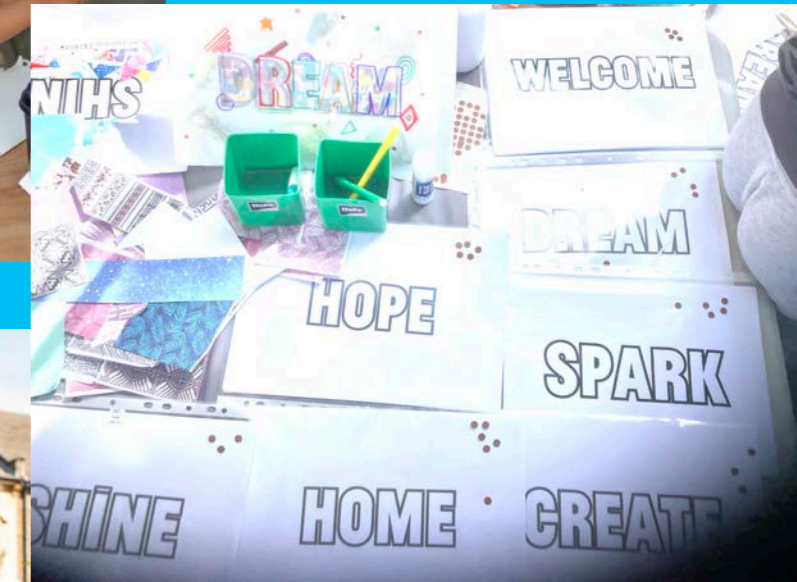
Participants were given a selection of words that they could choose as the basis of their artwork.

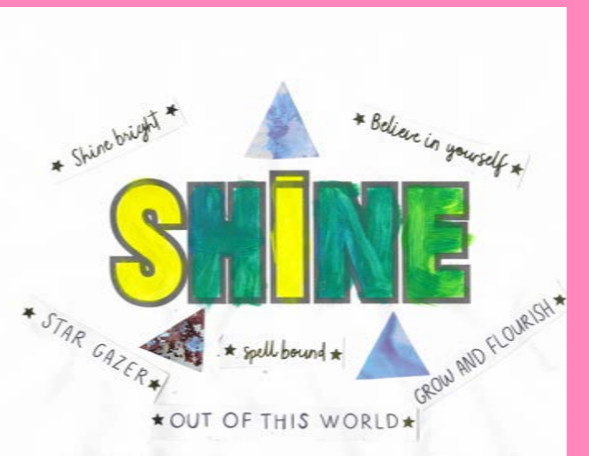
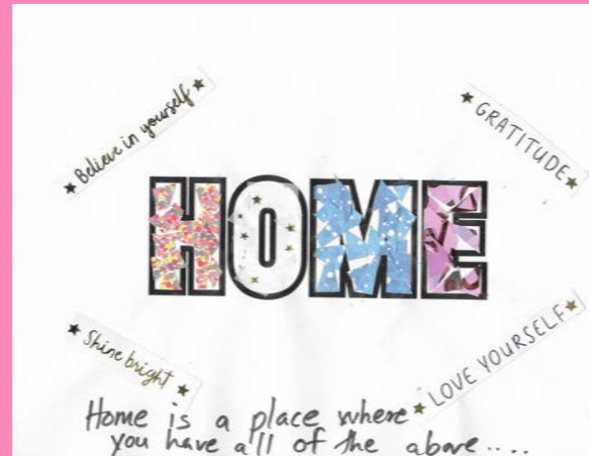
The activity revolved around participants using collage and paint to decorate their words, using patterns, colours and shapes.

The activity was mostly done by children, however adults present were also asked to vote on their favourite words and give feedback.

The drop-in nature of the session made it hard to have specific discussions with the participants but overall there was a sense of fun, creativity and community.

- **Votes on words from participants and parents led to the top scoring words being HOME, HOPE and SPARK**
- **Home resonated a lot with participant, many of whom are seeking a place to call home, some have moved out of the borough but still think of this as home.**
- **“I like hope, we always need hope”**
- **A lot of use of maps as part of the textures used.**
- **Overwhelmingly from this session, participants chose to decorate each letter differently.**





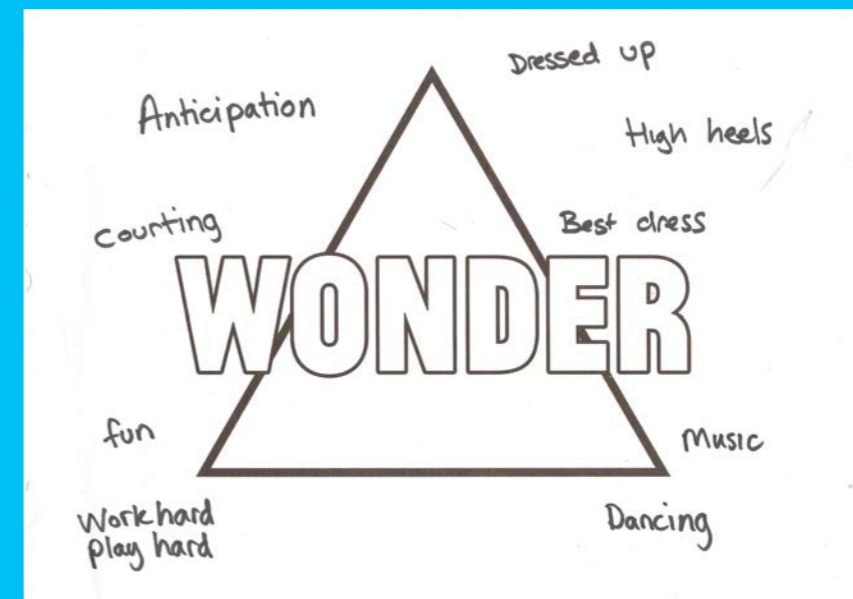
FOREST VIEW CARE HOME

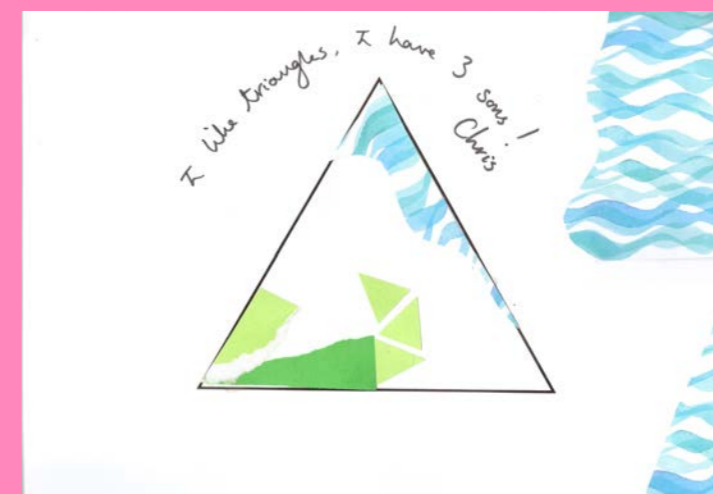
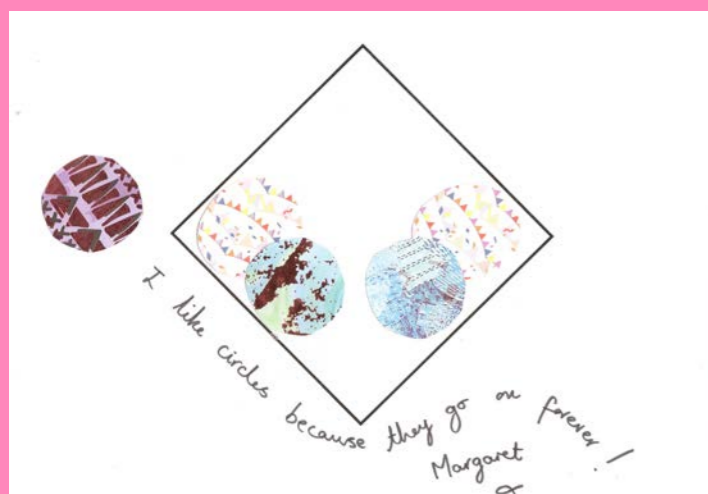
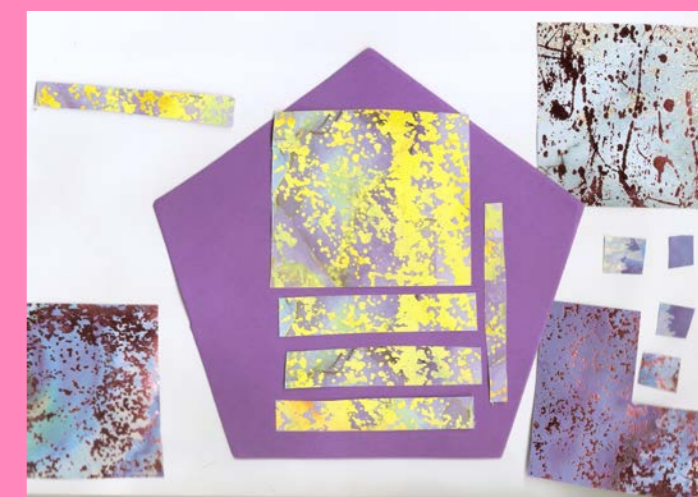
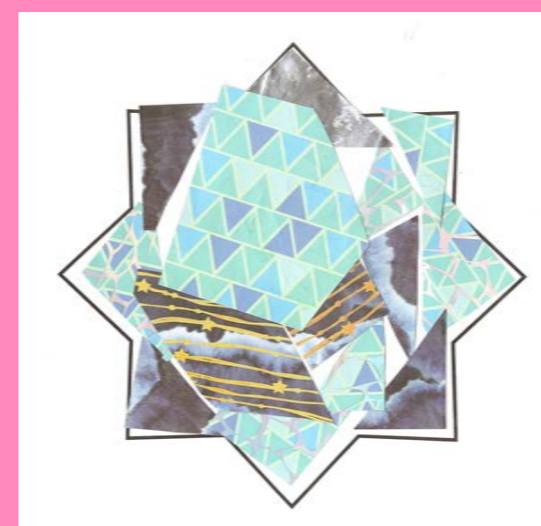
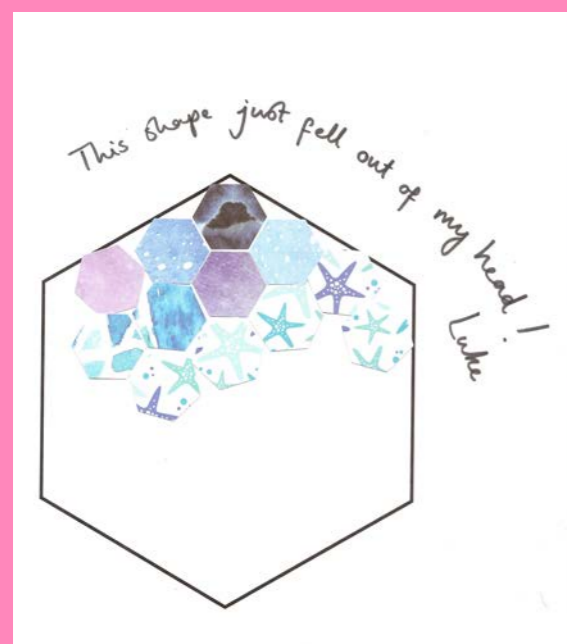
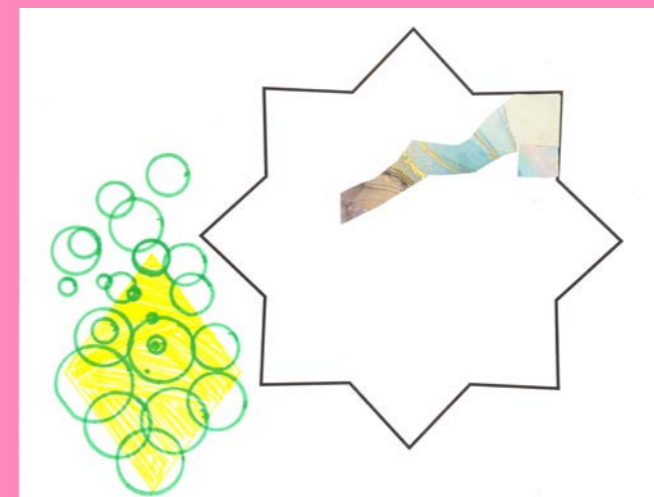
The creative aspect of the session revolved a lot more on shape and colour with participants choosing a shape to fill or work around.

Discussion on key suggested words took place and sparked animated conversations.

Because the mural project is about the new Cultural Quarter, we took the discussion from the point of view of “going out”; to the theatre, the cinema, a music venue, or for many participants the memory of the “Dance Halls”.

- A selection of different words were presented to the participants to discuss as main words for the mural. **PLAY, INSPIRE, CREATE** were all rejected as not being relevant to what “going out” is about.
- **WONDER** was welcomed as the participants felt it encapsulated the sense of anticipation that they remember from getting ready to go out.
- The animated discussions talked about getting “your best dress and heels” on, staggering home bare footed, sore from too much dancing, working hard all week to be able to go out on a Saturday night.
- Some participants said the colour purple reminded them of The Lyceum Theatre in all its grander.
- Many participants enjoyed collaging inside the shapes.
- “I like circles because they go on forever”





This participant's favourite colour is green because she likes plants and nature. She didn't have the motor skills to add more to the collage.

This participant loved the stars and she lit up when we started using them

WALTHAMSTOW TRADES HALL

The session was designed to be a group collage, using words and shapes to navigate across our paper thinking about our journeys in life and how we navigate our way.

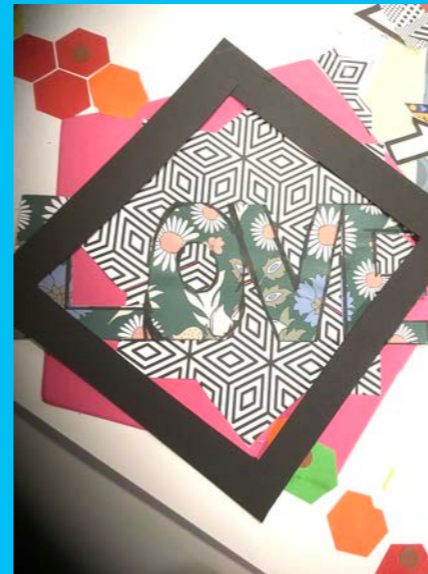
Materials focused on cultural patterns and dazzle patterns when experimenting with shapes and words.

Points where colleges crossed represent shared public spaces, where we interact with others and our navigation becomes entwined.

Discussion about fundamental shapes and local architecture.

Session to focus on Cairo Road residents and feedback from them on the mural for Cairo Place. Unfortunately no-one from the road could make the session.

- Although only 1 participant showed up, the artist, workshop facilitator and regeneration team representative took part in the activity to create discussion and encourage participation. As local residents and workers, it was a valid activity.
- “If Music Be The Food Of Love Play On”
- Inspired by the new Soho Theatre The participant came to the session with the Shakespeare quote already. Particularly as the reference to food and music links to the idea of the Cultural Quarter destinations.
- The use contrasting of dazzle and patterns was very bold and colourful, although the definition between letters starts to get lost, and needs to be considered from a neurodivergent sensitive perspective.
- We then used shapes to frame different parts of the collage to think about gobo stencil patterns.





- Use of smaller shapes as pathways between central word areas. The way finding tools across the collaborative collage space.



PRIORY COURT COMMUNITY CENTRE

This session was focused on group collage using shapes, words and patterns.

Create multi- generational artworks and capture different people's Journeys and explore who and where they overlap.

- One participant chose "Wonder" not only for the meaning of the word and the excitement it inspires but also because it sounds like "Wander" which is what she felt her portion of the collage reflects.
- "Wonder sounds like wander and I have wandered around"
- She has mapped her Journey across the UK physically with the paths between the cities she has lived in throughout her life using Hexagons as her chosen shape- carefully ensuring aspects of her chosen cultural pattern are within the shapes she cut out. The centre point of the collaborative collage notes where both participants overlap in Walthamstow



- Thought process of linking animals to way-finding came out of a discussion a young girl had with the women working on the collage with her about how animals go on journeys and travel to places
- The Young Girl herself had not travelled much yet but can still see the wonder in local animals and wildlife that she sees on her daily Journey.



- A young man with learning difficulties and his brother both created a design based around different words. He selected "Inspire" because "Inspire makes me feel good"
- Both him and his brother chose rainbow colours as they stated that using multiple colours make them feel happy hence the sentence made using the word "Believe in the colours"



- Craig Evans from street art duo STATIC, who will be delivery the Cairo Place mural, attended the session.
- Craig led discussions about spray paint techniques, colour and shapes.
- Craig selected the word "wonder" to create with, adding smaller triangles on his piece.



ROSE & CROWN RED ROOM

Session run by artist Vasundhara Shankari with reference to local architectural patterns that have always inspired her.

Session specifically focused on inviting women and girls to the workshop to give agency to their active role in shaping their environments and to give space to those who sometimes feel unsafe or harassed on the streets.

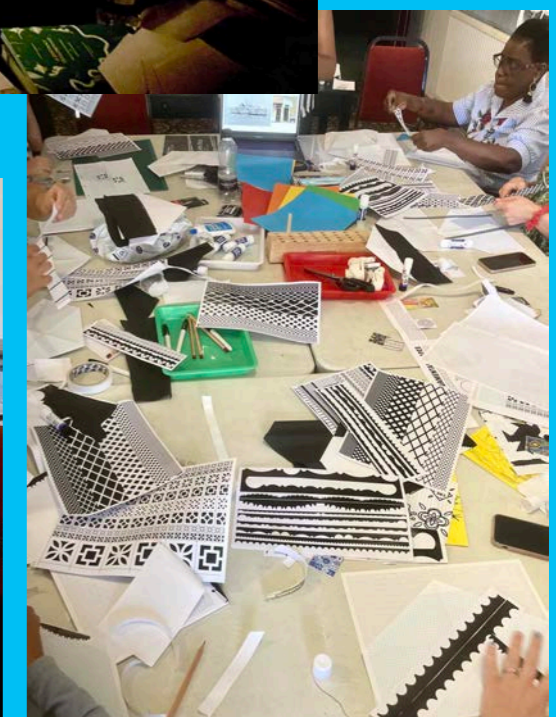
Participants taken through several different activities to build confidence with pattern making and negative space.

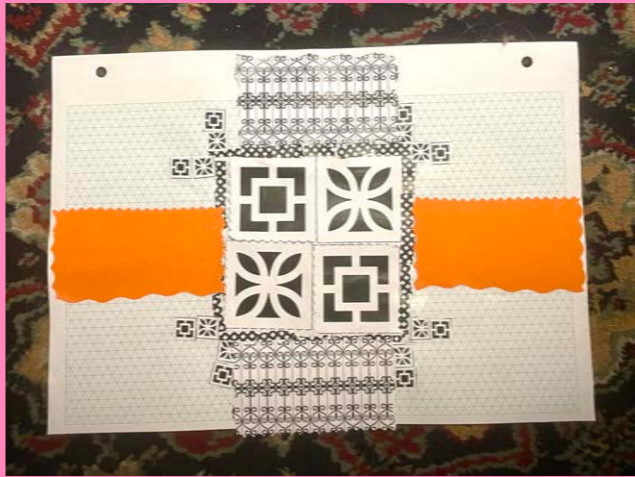
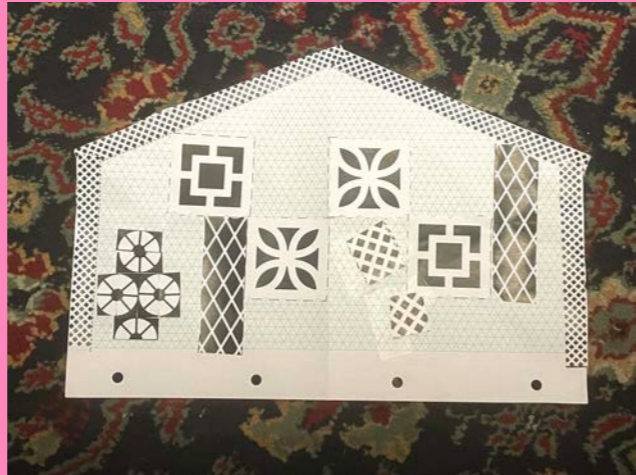
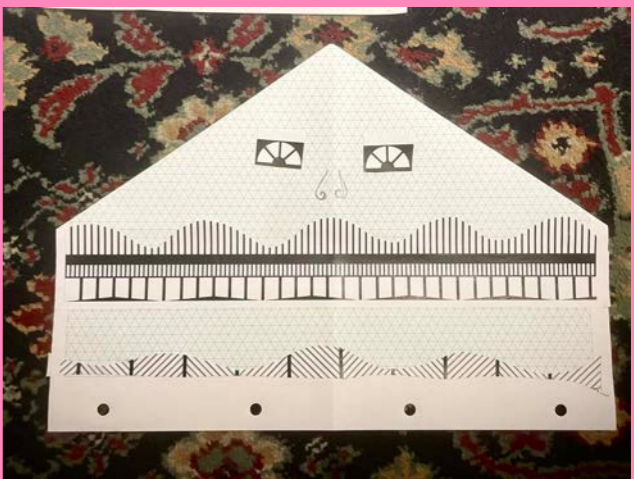
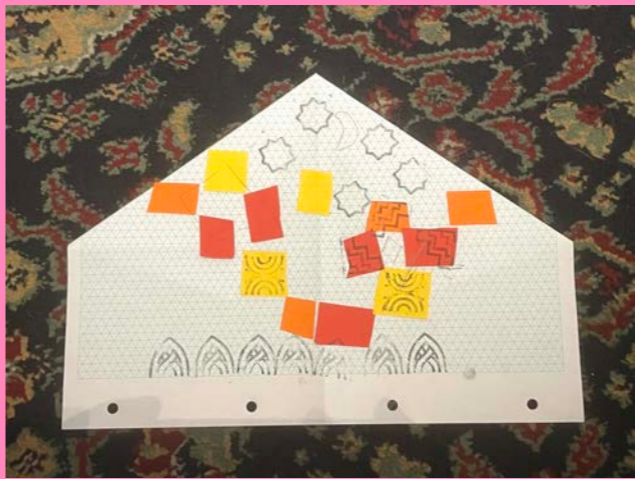
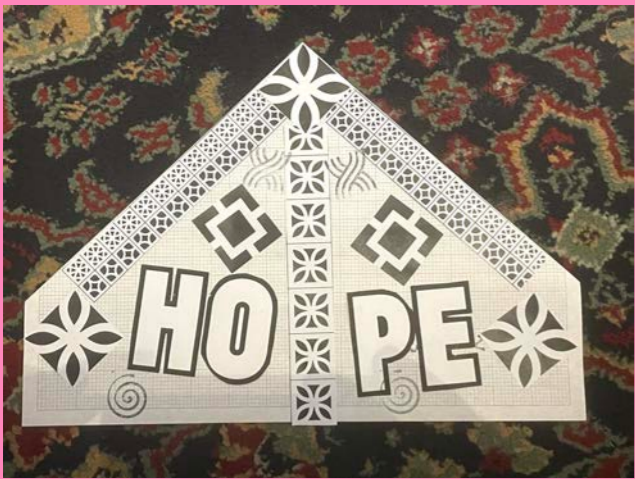
Paper folding to make the shape of the Delice wall to help guide composition.

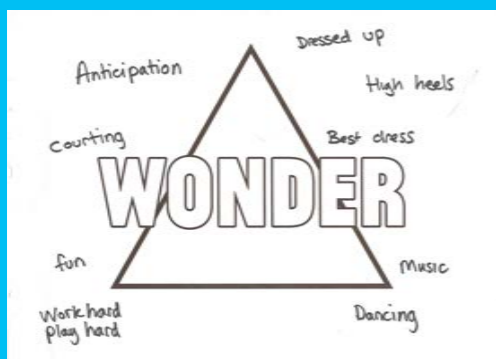
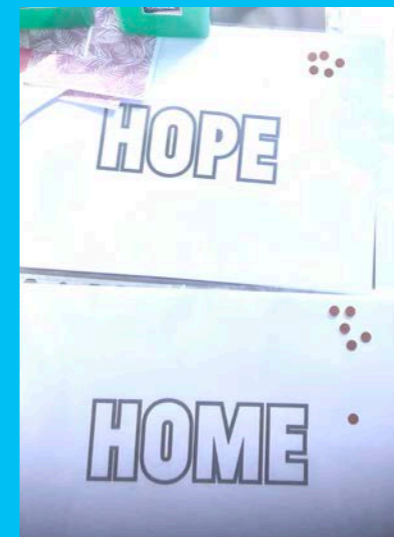
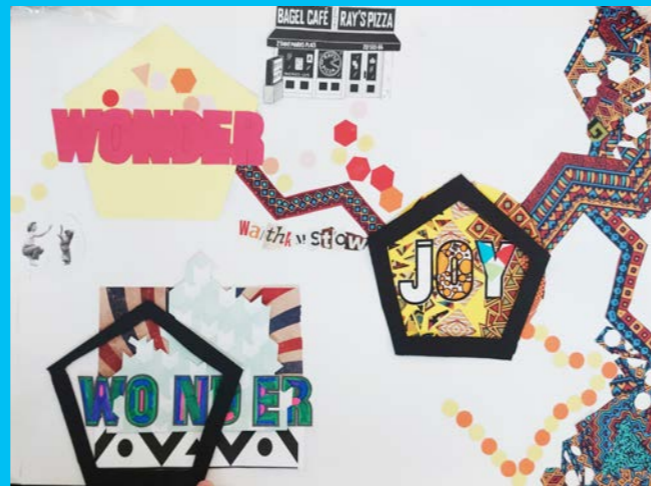
Discussions and activities around fundamental pattern making; radial, symmetric, asymmetric, stripes, repeated.

Last activity some participants moved on to bringing words into the composition. Discussions around the words and why they are important to us.

- **JOY:** “This process of creativity and pattern making is joyful. And the point of the project is about adding joy to our streets.”
- **CREATE:** “Being creative is really important. Being creative is my happy place. Access to be creative is fundamental to human well being.”
- **HOPE:** “One of the most beautiful things about humanity is our compassion for others. And because of this, this allows space for hope. An ability to believe that there is more beautiful possibilities than we sometimes see. A possible future with no misogyny no racism no inequality.”
- **HOPE:** “No matter how dark the situation is there is hope. We felt it in Covid, when we were isolated we had hope that we could come out of it. And we did, we changed and come out of the darkness better and more thoughtful to each other.”
- **General Discussion:** “Society tells us we are not good enough in our creativity. Need to break that cycle of holding back because we don’t reach perfection. We put pressure on ourselves to do it perfectly or not at all. Very often feelings held mostly by women and less likely by men. We need to allow ourselves space to make mistakes. Not just with creativity but in every aspect of our lives from work, to relationships, to family.”







Drawing from discussions and feedback during all the workshops, 5 key words came up across the sessions repeatedly that resonate the most with each other and the participants.

HOPE
JOY
CREATE
HOME
WONDER

ILLUMINATING WORDS —

ILLUMINATING WORDS: FINDING MEANING

William Morris has come to the fore whilst researching local poets and wordsmiths, aiming to draw a thread around our Words; creating an overarching meaning, finally uniting all the elements of the Illuminating Journeys project. In two collections of his work, 'Poems for Protesters' and 'Pilgrims of Hope', we find our five key words used again and again in Morris's impassioned and rousing texts. Morris is mostly known today for his art and design work, with some well known quotes used here and there, however a lot of his utopian work is written as poetry, prose and fictional stories.

William Morris had a deeply passionate belief in a better future. He believed with all his heart that, together, the people could create a better world, a society without injustice and inequality. He was an internationalist and welcomed those seeking refuge in the UK. He believed that we express our humanity through art, and the skills of our hands are what bond us. He believed that the shackles of poverty and exploitation could be overcome and that peace, unity and fellowship could create a common wealth for all.

The word HOPE is found the most often used in his poetry, displaying his burning aspiration for change from the abysmal conditions caused by the industrial revolution. The words JOY and WONDER are used a lot when he talks about the possibility of a different world, the feeling of coming HOME to a place of safety and comfort. In all of this is his call to arms to CREATE; create art, create a better life, create unity. The thread that ties our words together isn't a single stanza or line, but rather the totality of his writing and the inspirational message he conveyed in his written work.

From these five words, the three that we choose for our illuminated words as part of the Illuminating Journeys trilogy of artworks are WONDER, HOPE and CREATE. We want the words to be able to be read separately and together, from any direction and in any order. These three in particular have a never ending feedback loop which offers no beginning or end to how they should be read. We WONDER in awe at something profound or beautiful; this gives us HOPE in each other, in the future, in what is possible to achieve, this inspires us to CREATE a new tomorrow, new inventions, a work of art; which offers us new ways to WONDER at something amazing, giving us hope, inspiring creativity.

MURAL FOR HATHERLEY MEWS

- ★ Feedback and words from workshop with several prominent Hatherley Mews businesses.
- ★ 6 businesses present at workshop.
- ★ Mural for 2 walls.
- ★ To be future proof with room for new businesses to feel included in the mural.
- ★ Consideration of more general positive words as well as ones specific to businesses.
- ★ Way to signpost into Hatherley Mews, both for new “wandering” visitors coming to the Soho Theatre and for people invited to an appointment by a resident business.
- ★ Way to deter anti-social behaviour by becoming a more vibrant area.



Left Wall:

Participants rejected the idea of one large word like ‘Connect’ or ‘Discover’ which they found too abstract and irrelevant on its own. Instead agreed upon the word **TRAMWORKS** in our project font across the left wall (reading down the passageway). This is the name given to the collective of businesses within Hatherley Mews and felt like a positive way to include everyone.

Right Wall:

This felt like a better place to have a myriad of the connecting words and symbols that give a flavour of what visitors could expect when they arrive within the TRAMWORKS hub. Below is a list of words from that session, however it would be great if this was a mix of words and symbols to keep the mural feeling vibrant and playful.

MOVEMENT. COMMUNITY. URBAN EDEN. JOY. BELONG. CULTURE. CONNECT. INCLUSIVE. POTTERY. HEAL. CLASSES. CERAMICS. ART. PLAY. LEARN. CREATIVITY. MAKE. EAT. FOOD. PIZZA. COFFEE. WELLBEING. MOVE. DISCOVER. WELCOME. DRINK. MEET. TEA. YOGA. EXPLORE