

Anna Francis, *Brownfield Ikebana*, 2012 Director at AirSpace Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent and Associate Professor of Fine Art and Social Practice at Staffordshire University

Amplifying the Artist's Voice in the City



AirSpace Gallery, opened in Stoke-on-Trent in 2006 In response to a gap...our ethos 'it's not here so how do I make one/it happen'

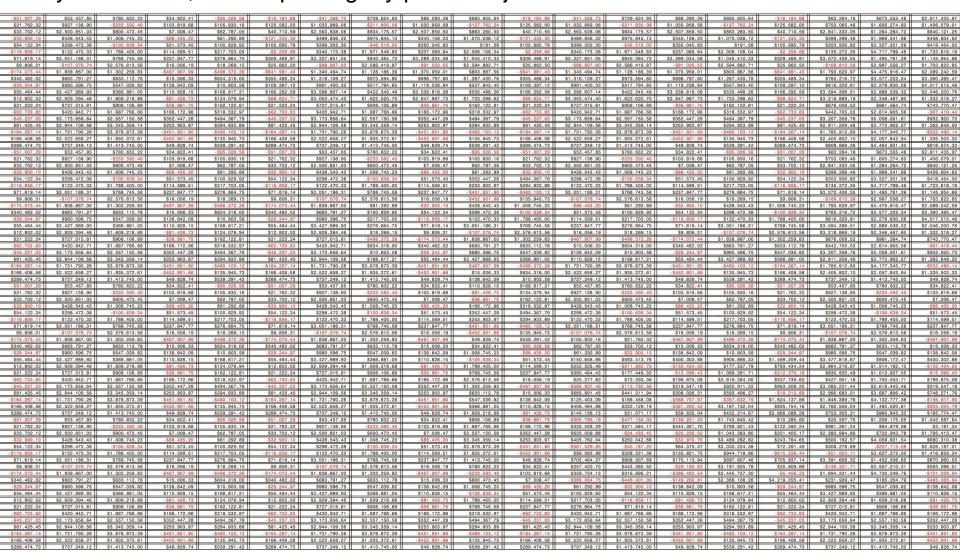
Interested in Housing Renewal in Cities



Indefinable City Installation View, AirSpace Gallery - February, 2007.

Going back in time to 10 years ago:

I was applying to all sorts of opportunities....wondering how to take the next step in my arts career, and stop doing my part time job as a carer.

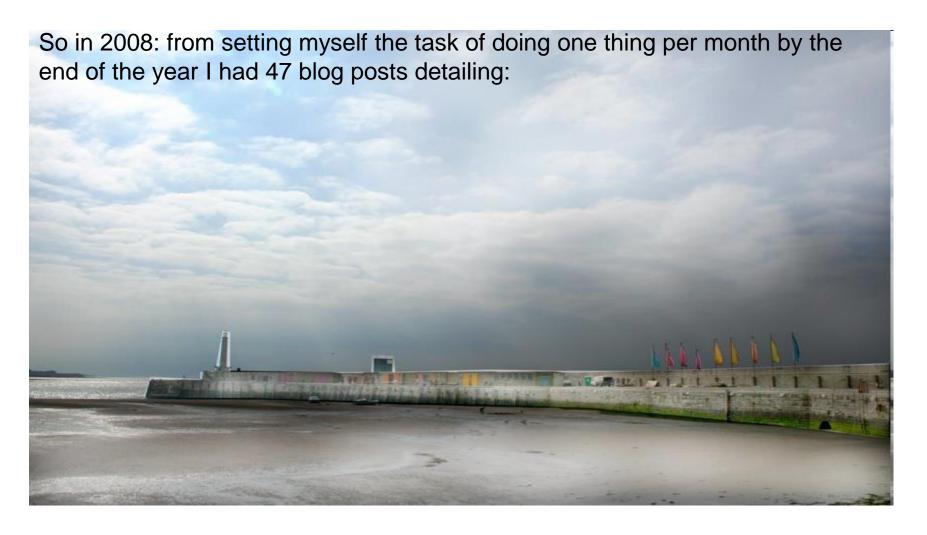


I had been keeping a spread sheet....

Stop waiting for the opportunities to come in - create your own

- 2008 The Year of Finding Spaces in the City for Art.
 The city becomes a test bed for new ideas
- Exhibitions/Events
- Consultations
- Research trips
- Collaborative projects
- Residencies
- Interventions

Perhaps most importantly: started a blog to document it all



Research visits to Lille, Liverpool, Preston, Nottingham, Northampton and Margate (all leading to extended networks), self-initiated projects, exhibitions and Then as the year went on commissions

Weigh up the opportunity: what will I learn? Who will I meet? What connections can be made? Does it make sense in relation to my aims for the year?



The Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home: looking at the housing renewal Pathfinder in Liverpool







Anfield photographic piece 2008. Shown in publication, *Future Visions of History*, Liverpool Biennial

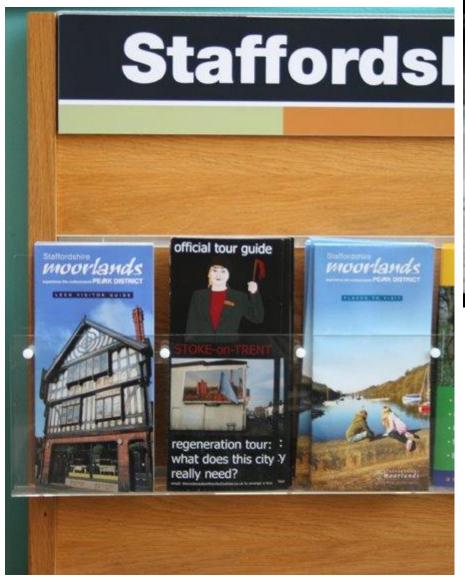


Give me your hand project, Beyond Bricks, commissioned by Multistory, 2008.

Commissioned to carry out a collaborative participatory project in Lozells and East Handsworth, 2008 – during a time of housing renewal – taught me a lot but I felt frustrated....











A lot of my work is located in the city where I live, but always in relation to other places: City Tour Guide - 2009-10 – again responding to a gap – a City with no tour guide





TALKING CITY





Talking City Live at Shop: a chat show to talk about the regeneration of the City Commissioned by Gemma Thomas 'SHOP' project 2010

Positioned myself as a commentator on the processes of change in the city, inviting those involved to question the artist's role in that (making them think more abut what that might mean.)

Create space for dialogue With decision makers

Interested in the sites in city's where development is on hold: Brownfield Sites, and their role in local ecologies



Don't mind the gaps: Consider how you can fill them

Brownfield Ikebana like many artists – looking at other places for what is relevant to the place where I live and work: Interesting in Japan that there are many initiatives to bring artists to rural areas. What interests me about the way that artists work with their surroundings, recognising, highlighting and using the resources of a place (when others overlook them.)



Headspace Artist Residency in Nara Mountains, Japan: Artists helping with the harvest

Brownfield Ikebana: started to research during residency in the Mountains of Nara



Returned to the City to look at 3 largest Brownfield Sites within the city centre: The ABC Cinema Site, Abbatoir and Greyhound Track sites



Share the methods

How To Make a Brownfield Ikebana Works Instruction: Please read to ensure you understand your responsibilities when using the Artist's Kit:

What you need to know:

1. SCOPE & PURPOSE

- 1.1 This works instruction (WI) covers the selection of site and flowers, and the use of equipment when making a Brownfield Ikebana.
- 1.2 The purpose of this WI is to ensure that the processes described are carried out as efficiently and effectively as possible, while bearing in mind certain health and safety guidance measures. Anna Francis takes no responsibility for any erroneous use.

2. SELECTION AND ASSEMBLY:



2.1 Assemble your equipment for creating a Brownfield Ikebana. You will need; secateurs, a selection of kenzan, gloves to protect against thorns and



2.2 Select your site carefully; a site which has been between demolition and development for over 12 months is best, as this allows for maximum



2.3 Walk the site thoroughly to get a good idea of the diversity of plants which have appeared.



2.4 Seek out the vessels which will make beautiful or surprising combinations for



2.5 You may wish to partner your vessel with a support salvaged from the site: this could be fabric or other



2.6 Select your flowers carefully, considering what will work in the space that they are intended for, but also considering Shin, Soe and Hikae



2.7 As soon as you have cut your plants, wrap them in the wet newspaper to ensure they remain fresh.



2.8 Take your vessel, and select a kenzan which will be heavy enough to support your plants, while also fitting into the



2.9 This ikebana variation comprises Shin (Heaven) Soe (Man) and Hikae (Earth). Shin = width + height of vessel + 100%. Soe should be 75% of Shin, and Hikae should be 50%.



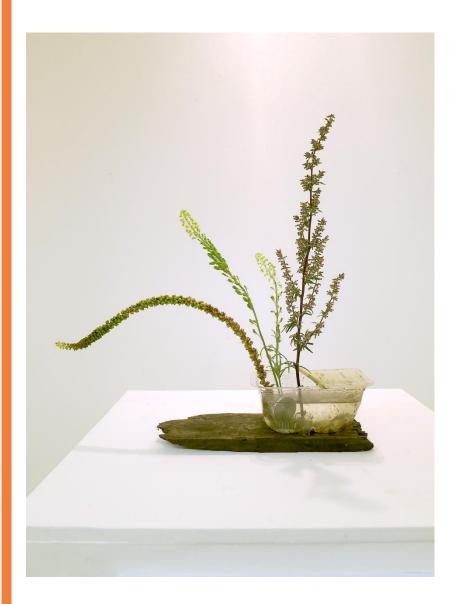
2.10 Imagine a line coming from 12 o' clock from the kenzan : Shin should be placed into the Kenzan at between 0 and 5 degrees from that line, Soe at between 15 and 45 degrees and hikae at between



outside the vessel and then added, or alternatively built into the vessel. Remember that when building, you are the sun, and therefore the flowers should grow towards you.



2.11 The arrangement can be assembled 2.12 Any additions to the main lines are called Jushi or supplementaries, and should not outflank the stem they





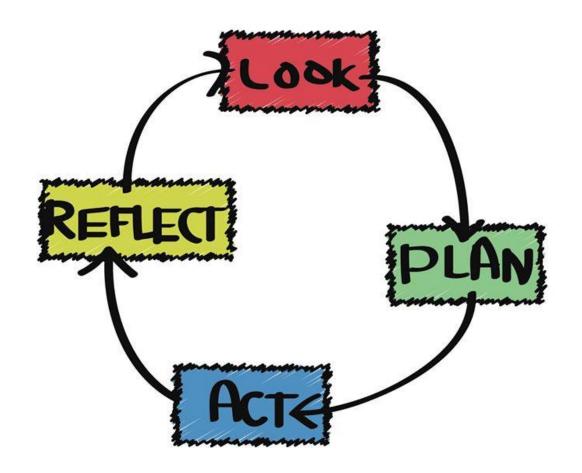






Brownfield Ikebana created by workshop participants.





ACTION RESEARCH PROCESS

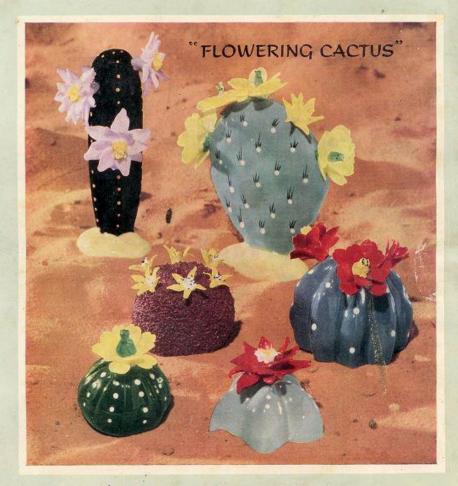






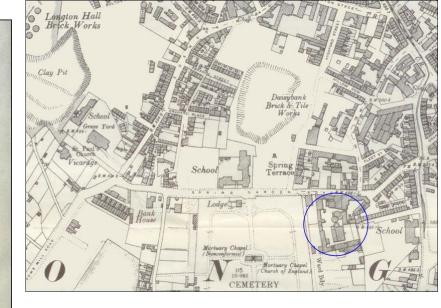
POTTERY GAZETTE

and Glass Trade Review · August 1956



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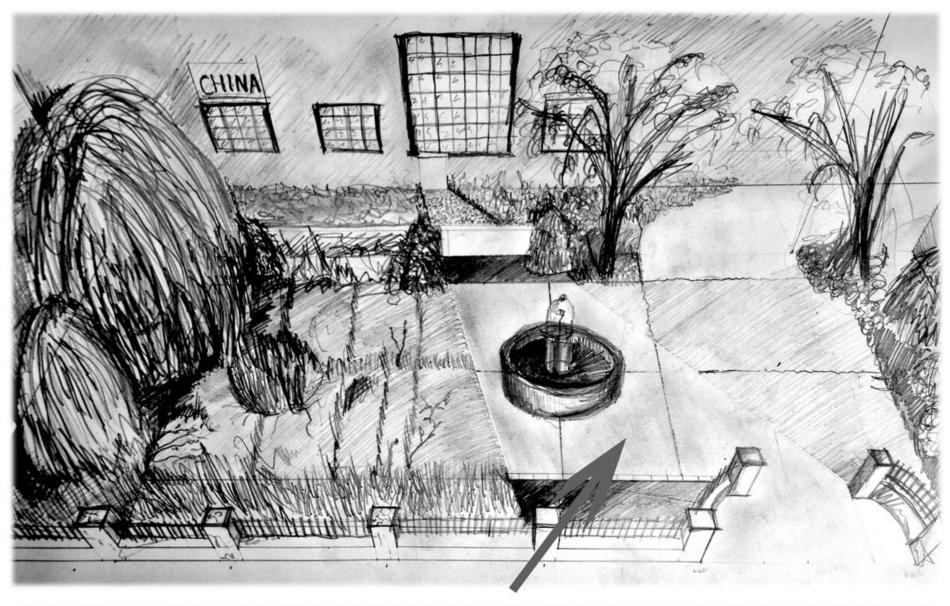








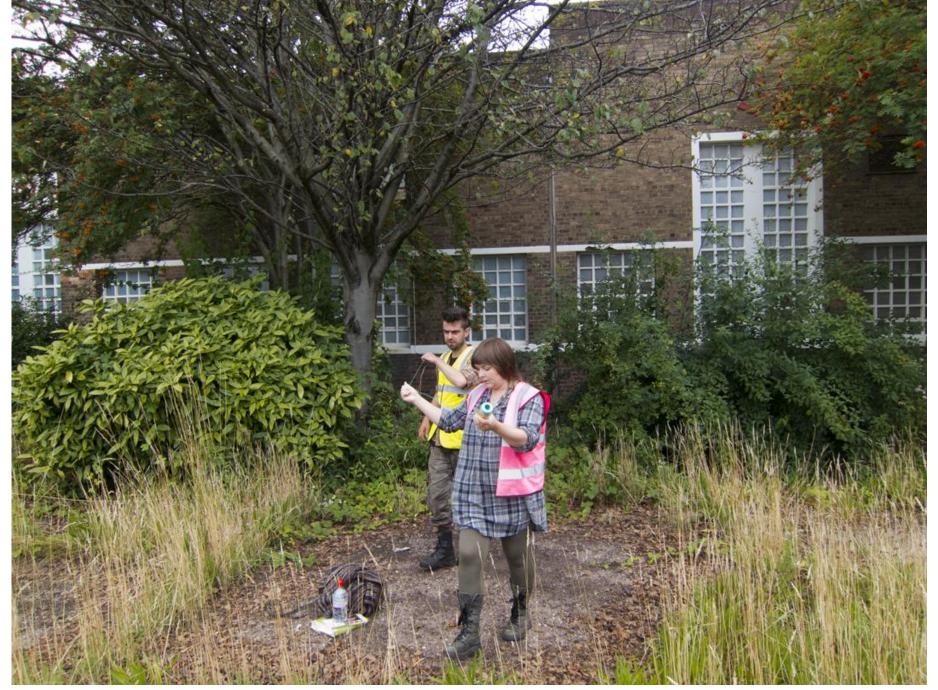




This triangular shaped area will be completely cleared, cleaned, weeded and pruned. We will construct a central circular raised bed, from Spode bricks, which we intend to plant with Roses which refer to the process of the development of the new "Spode Rose". The rest of the space will remain unruly and overgrown, to highlight the work undertaken, and allow the viewer to imagine the complete renovation.

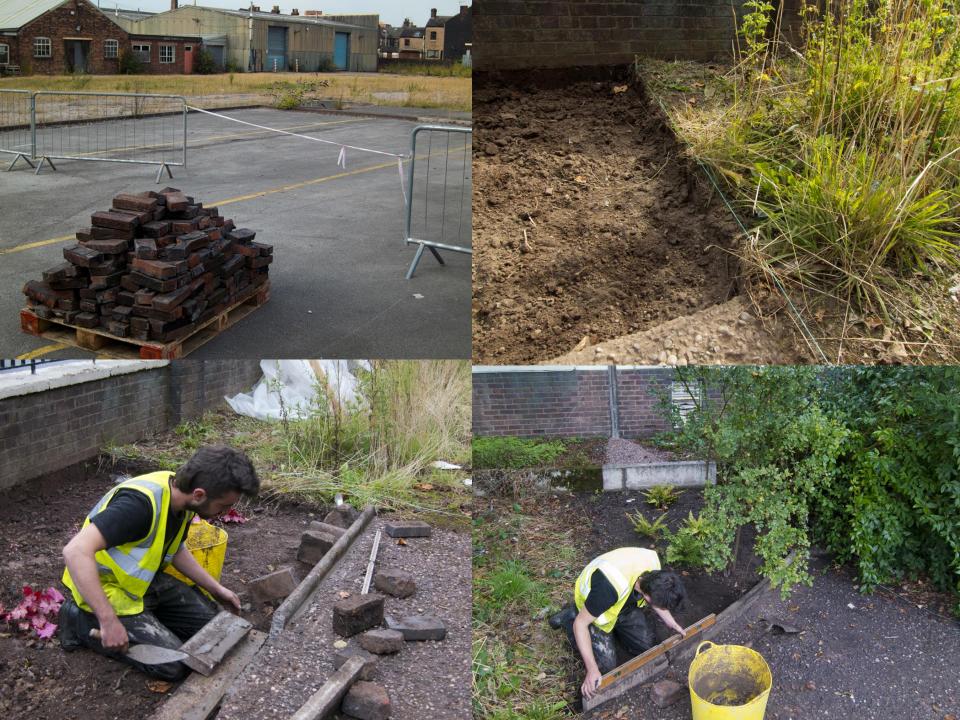


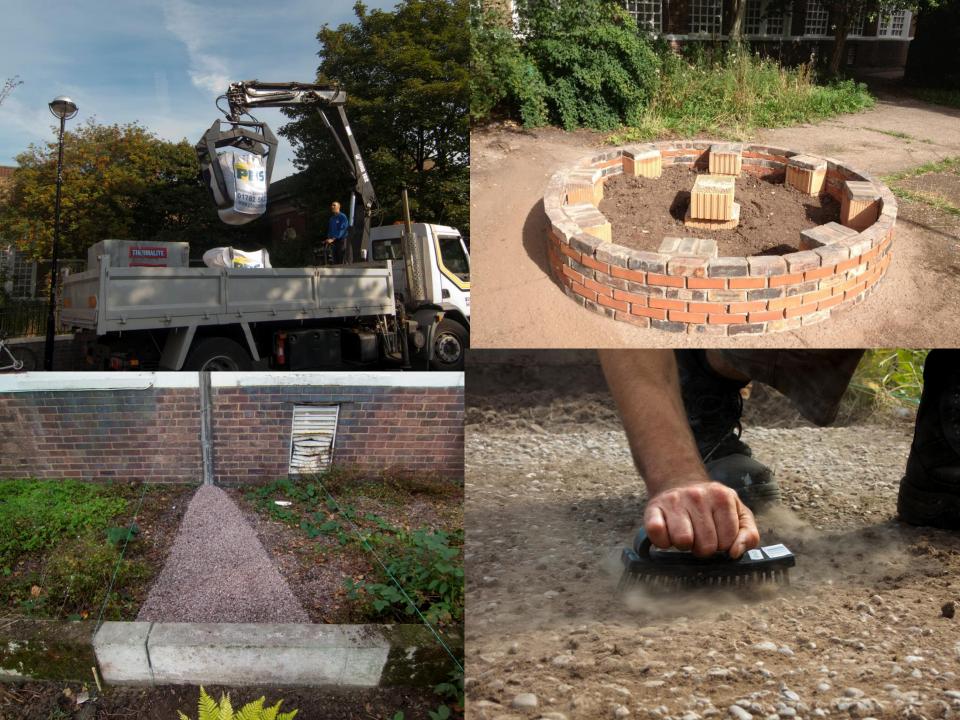
Back to the site



2013 - Mark out the triangle





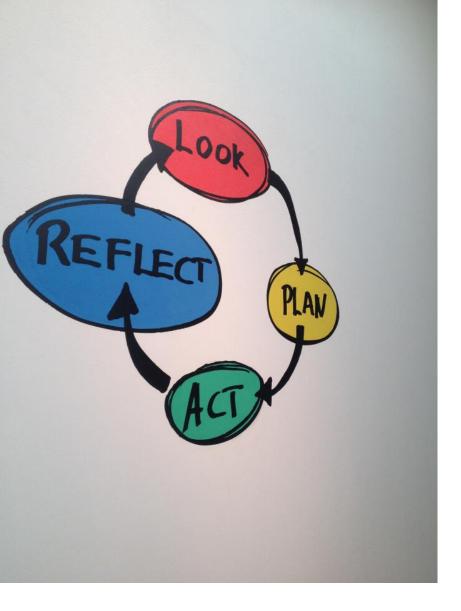


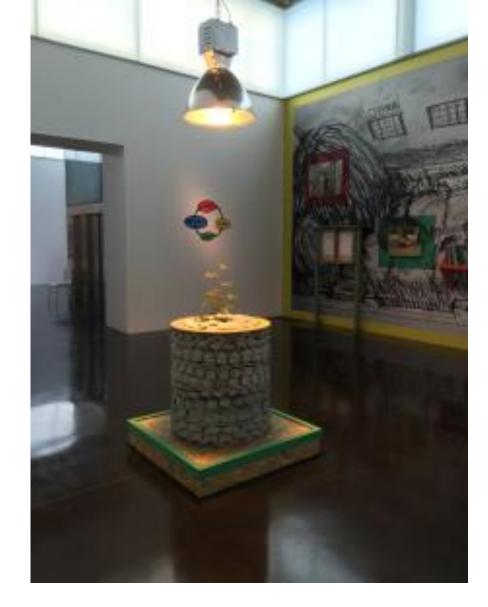






December 2014 – return to Fryers to pick up the first 10 rose bushes to be sent to our crowd funders





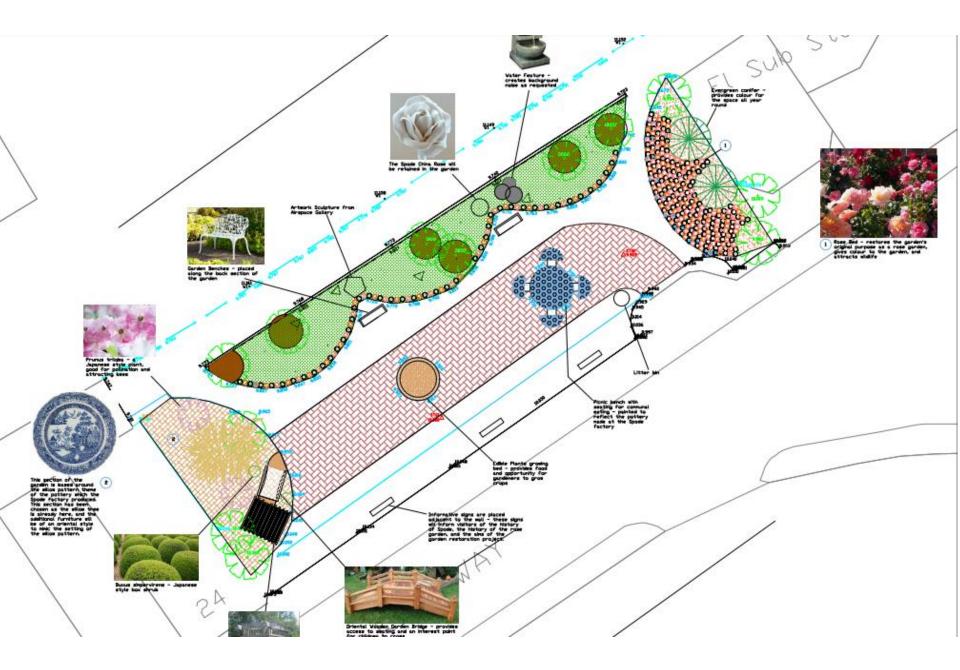
Commissioned by The New Art Gallery Walsall to showcase the project – brought a whole new set of creative challenges…but a new audience as well

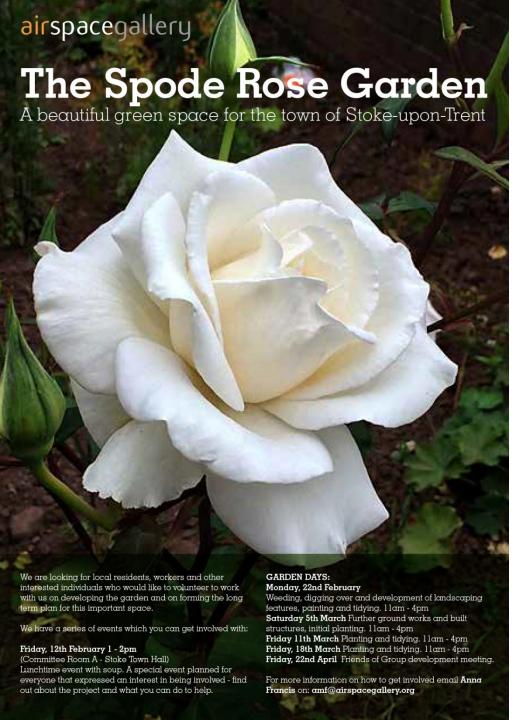


The intervention made in Summer 2015 drew attention....



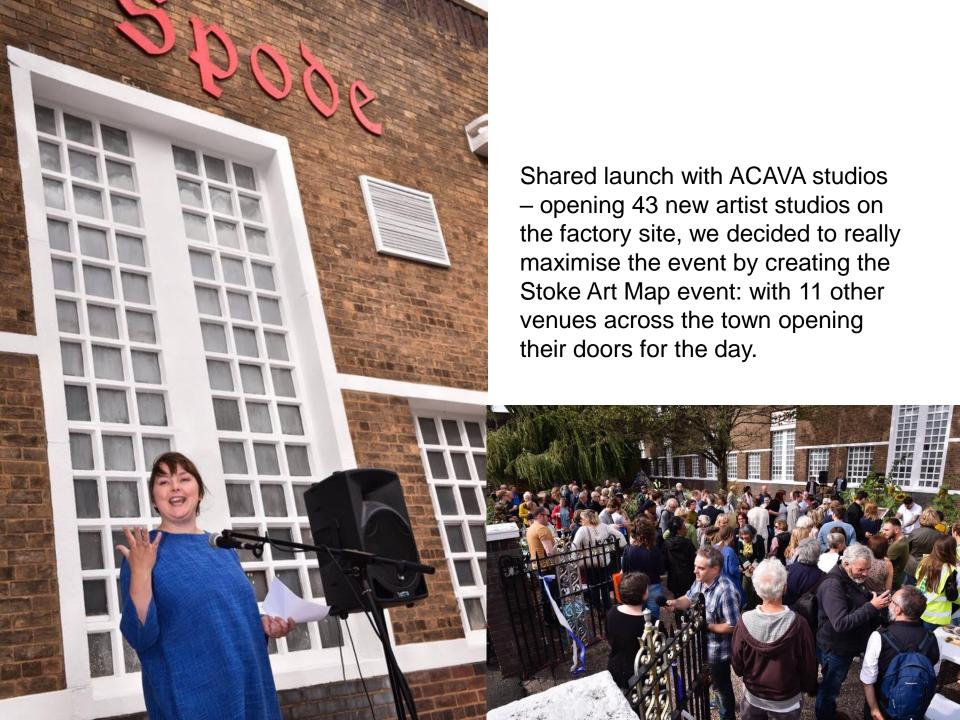
Consultation during BCB 2015





The bulk of the work Feb- March 2016

A series of gardening events to transform the space, and alongside that, working to set up a 'Friends of' group (Succession planning)



Regular gardening events









Regular community events:
The Sunflower Party to celebrate the longest day of the year





Sun up to sun down raku firing



The role of the artist in society:

Artist as Citizen – What if I don't go home at the end of the day? What if I work where I live?







Enid Seeney, designer of Ridgway Pottery's Homemaker design, the first female to train in the design studio at the Spode Factory Community Maker 2015: A series of workshops where we meet, eat and make



A chance to use the green space and meet the neighbours















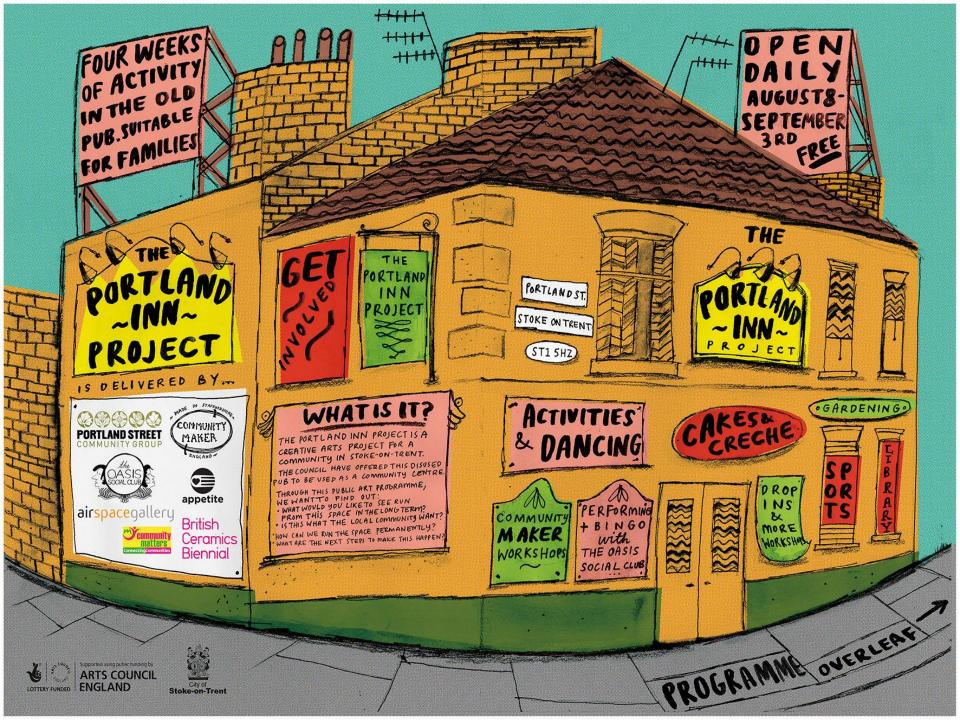
Final event of the summer 2015 was a community celebration: over 100 people came along



Then: using the wares to make drawings and lino prints, thinking about next stage of project and what we had learnt the community might need



Opportunity to Collaborate with artist Rebecca Davies, whose project The Oasis Social Club had been taking place in the area in Summer 2015.





Clay workshops: bring a plate – creating a prototype table setting, from the plates found in the community

Using Arduino technology and experimenting with conductive glazes and gold banding to make ceramics talk





Aerobics, bingo, tae kwondo, cooking, library sessions, coffee mornings, hula hooping, business development session, karaoke, sign writing, pool tournament, table tennis tournament, engraving, printing...

































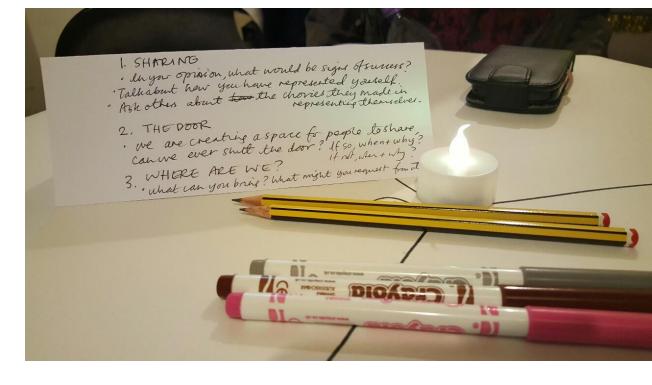








Asking questions Gathering evidence





An evening conversation for artists to discuss our responsibilities when working in regeneration contexts...

Considering Gentrification...interesting response from the kids on the street



Community Celebration Event: Future of the Pub Photoshoot



Getting people involved in the decision making, and creating a space for anyone to take part...

Then: writing a business plan based on our findings:

A community space, a social enterprise ceramics workshop, artist residency space and residential flat.





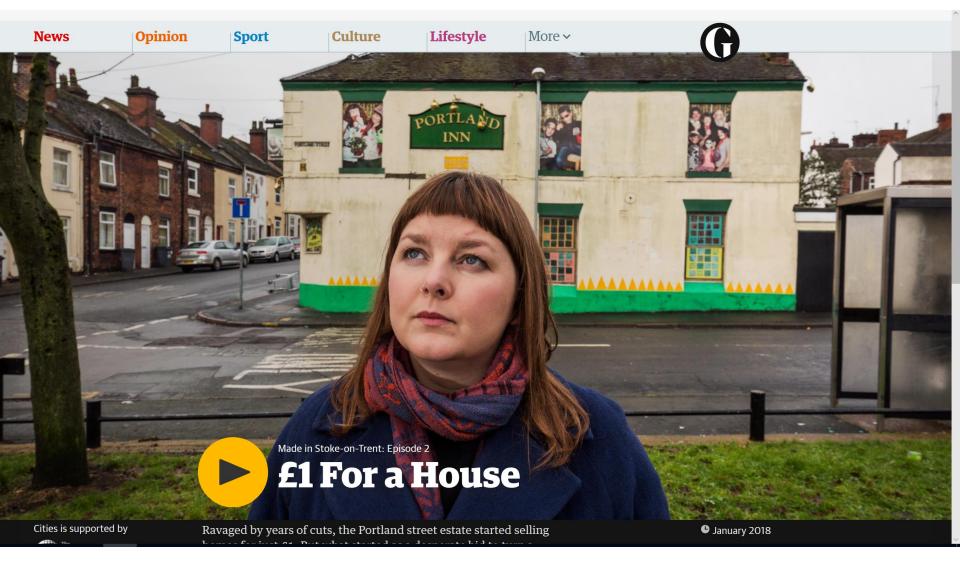


We hosted a celebratory meal at the British Ceramics Biennial 2017.





An important moment: the community organised an event, and asked us to help....Bonfire night 2017



The project was used as a case study by the LGA on how councils can work with communities via arts project.

The project and the area were the subject of a Guardian film...



Modes of Practice

- 1. Be Active: Support Each-other.
- 2. Be Active: Be an Activist.
- 3. Be Active: Be an Artist.
- 4. Value Yourself, Your Time and Your Skills.
- 5. Share Your Knowledge and Resources.
- 6. Focus, Strategise and Plan.
- 7. Be Critical Be Fair.
- 8. Know Your Rights.

A guide for artists and creative practitioners in the age of austerity.



http://airspacegallery.org/

http://annafrancis.blogspot.co.uk/

http://theportlandinnproject.tumblr.com/