



Rethinking the Brownfield  
Anna Francis



## Project Details

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Name: Anna Francis

Title of Output: Rethinking The Brownfield

Years: 2014 - 2021

Output Type: Other

Associated URL:

<https://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/lists/49>

### **Urban Nature Exploration Guide – Product Image (2014)**

A guide to help readers notice and record nature in our cities, commissioned by Saturday Market Project.





# Introduction

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## Description

*Rethinking the Brownfield* is a continuous body of work which Francis first undertook in 2012 to examine how arts practice can reframe disused urban brownfield in the public consciousness. The initial research took place during a research residency in Nara, Japan, where Francis learned the Japanese flower arranging technique Ikebana, before returning to Stoke-on-Trent to begin an exploration of 3 city centre brownfields, the site of the greyhound track, the abattoir and the ABC Cinema. These 3 sites became the focus of activity, and have been visited regularly since 2012, where workshops have been hosted on the sites, as well as the sites explored and responsive artworks created in the form of 'Brownfield Ikebana' in 2012, 2015 and 2018. Francis has also looked closely at developed brownfields, via a research activity looking at the former National Garden Festival Site (see the *Lost Gardens* curatorial project) and Westport Lake (see *Birder's Paradise*.) *Rethinking the Brownfield* also led to the development of the Spode Rose Garden in a previously disused space, now a public green space. This project along with *Brownfield Ikebana* workshops, urban nature tours and *Brownfield Banquets* have all created space for dialogue with the public about the usefulness and purpose of these sites in ecological terms for wildlife and humans.

## Dissemination

Research underpinning *Rethinking the Brownfield* has been disseminated via UK and international conferences including *Nordic Geographers Meeting 2015*, Estonia (2015), as well as Artist Professional Development talks and workshops led by Francis including at *The Art of Dwelling: IXIA* and *In Certain Places* conference on public art now, Birmingham (2015), and as Keynote speaker to *Stories of Transformation and Change*, Deda Derby Visual Arts Summit, Derby (2018).

The research process and outcomes of the project have been exhibited in various exhibitions including *Treeline* exhibition, Vivid, Birmingham (2018), *Cryopreservation* exhibition, SYSON Project Space, Nottingham (2015), *Small Worlds* exhibition, New Art Gallery Walsall (2015), British Ceramics Biennial ('BCB'), Stoke-on-Trent (2015).



# Introduction

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## Statement

The city of Stoke-on-Trent has many post-industrial brownfield sites, both as a result of a downturn in the local ceramics, steel and coal industries, and due to significant housing renewal within the city since 2006. Francis has used an action research approach to explore these sites in terms of their floral ecology, histories and current use or misuse, which has framed a series of investigations, interrogations and interventions across sites which have included: workshops, walks, events, research residencies and responsive exhibitions.

The walks and hands on workshops which have taken place in Stoke-on-Trent, London and Birmingham with the general public as well as targeted events for artists physically bring people to the sites to locate the specific ecological value of the sites, via, for example species audits, while employing methods to visually reframe the sites and how people think of them.

*Brownfield Banquets* aimed to challenge fears around brownfield sites, which frame them as spaces of potential threat and danger, by aiming to reframe these spaces as resilient eco-systems, which can, with little or no intervention, become sites of potential. Through meal-based events, on-site discussion platforms were created, which utilised the plants growing on the site visually and within the meal itself to facilitate discussion with participants about the site, how they think of it, and its potential uses and usefulness for city dwellers.

The film *Rethinking The Brownfields* (2018) <https://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/5695/> aimed to demonstrate the potential for existing sites, and to raise questions about what is being lost in ecological terms as the Brownfield sites across the city of Stoke-on-Trent are being developed, and to question the responsibility of developers in considering plant and animal ecologies within their plans.

Other investigations have included curatorial projects on developed brownfields, and both temporary and permanent interventions at abandoned and disused sites in the city, in order to examine the usefulness and resources of the sites.



## Aims and Objectives

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The research's aim is to bring public attention to disused urban spaces within Stoke-on-Trent to then examine their potential use and resource value. To achieve this aim, Francis developed a programme of investigations, interrogations and interventions across the city's developed and undeveloped brownfield sites.

Often event based, the activities invite the public and artistic communities to sites in order to test how they can be used and to involve a wider range of groups in the discussions and questions raised.

### Research Questions

Can brownfield sites in cities be reframed, via creative intervention, in order to create space to discuss the ecological and social interim use value of these sites?

Can alternative approaches to participatory development be tested, which involve stakeholders in the planning and development processes in slow and meaningful ways, in order to deliver grass roots change which is sustainable?

### ***Wayward Walks, British Ceramics Biennial, Spode Factory, 2015.***

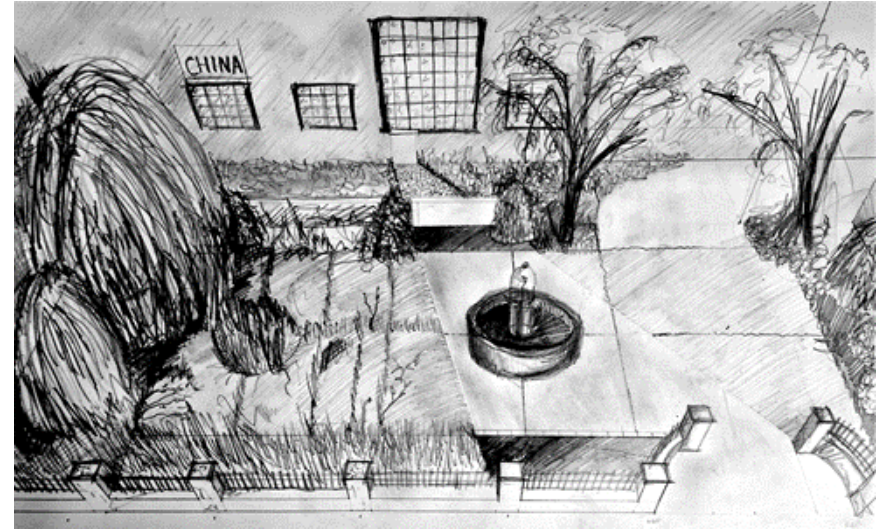
Walks led by Francis around the Spode Factory Site in Stoke-on-Trent. These walks explored the history of printing processes developed on the site in relation to the weeds and plants now occupying the site.





## Aims and Objectives

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As the *Spode Rose Garden* project showed, it was important to start with small scale interventions. These works engaged stakeholders in the process and gathered the resources for more significant, long-term development of sites.

### **Spode Rose Garden Intervention and initial sketch, 2013.**

Early interventions in 2013 and 2015 involved developing just one section of the abandoned garden, with the aim of involving stakeholders and landowners to engage both in debate about the future potential usage of the site.

## Research Context

It has been proven that spending time in green spaces, however small, can improve city dwellers' health and wellbeing. In some major cities, mature brownfield sites have come to be recognised for the important contribution they can make to a rich and diverse ecology, for both humans and animals, as set out by Professor Peter Crane, Director of The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (2002):

'These brownfield sites have become crucially important places for people and wildlife, reconnecting urban communities with nature' (i).

Many of these sites, far from being regarded as eyesores and problem spaces, can be reframed in relation to the diversity of animal and insect inhabitants found there. Moreover, and unlike many highly manicured greenfield sites, they can sustain a rich variety of plant life due to their specific situations and features. In many cases the plants to be found on the brownfield can be seen to be highly adaptable, resourceful and opportunistic, and yet, in a lot of cities the role of these sites in the development of healthy city ecologies is undervalued.



**Artist Soup Kitchen – Brownfields: Sites of Specific Scientific Interest?**  
Professional development event for artists and scientists at AirSpace Gallery and Greyhound Track Brownfield, Stoke-on-Trent (2018).



## Research Context

To rethink the brownfield, the sites can be seen as an important interim nature haven for wildlife, and with little or no intervention, can be transformed in our minds into important and useful temporary sites for nature. In post-industrial cities, these sites can mature for many years – becoming established with a diverse range of both flora and fauna. It is time that developers and landowners recognise that these sites can serve as important habitat for animals, and perhaps build some space for wildlife into their development plans in recognition of this.

Just as urban field ecologist and geographer Matthew Gandy's research examines the wastelands of urban areas, Rethinking the Brownfield aims to focus activity on one city and its various post-industrial sites.

'Within urban ecology significant attention has been devoted to wastelands as "ecological refugia" or islands of bio-diversity. These spontaneous ecologies can serve as "accidental laboratories" for cultural and scientific curiosity'.  
(ii)



### **Brownfield Banquet Poster, AirSpace Gallery (2017)**

Poster for an event on the site of the Lichfield Street Brownfield, Stoke-on-Trent, which invited the public to a meal, public address and discussion in relation to the Government Pathfinder Housing Renewal programme, which was scrapped in 2010.



## Research Context

The walks and hands-on workshops which have taken place in Stoke-on-Trent, London and Birmingham with the general public, as well as targeted events for artists, physically bring people to urban sites to locate the specific ecological and social value of brownfields. The various interventions and public explorations of site have interested artists and academic practitioners from across geography, natural sciences, urban studies and ecology. At The Nordic Geographers Meeting (2015) the debates raised by the site-based interventions were of relevance and interest to academics across the fields of arts, geography and social sciences. They opened connections to Gandy's keynote address on the complex political and 'historically contested characteristics of urban nature', 'From urban ecology to ecological urbanism: an ambiguous trajectory'.



**Twitter feed from Nordic Geographers Meeting (2015)**

## Research Context

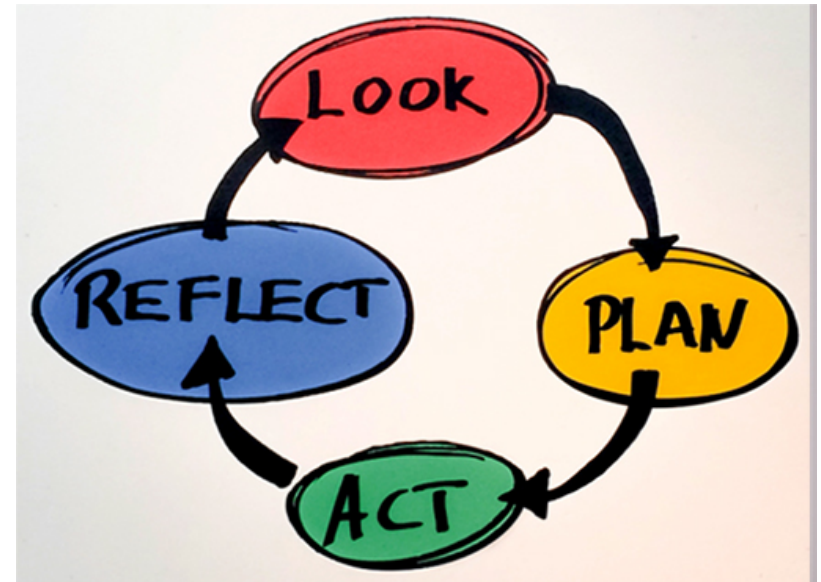
As Francis presented at the *Small Worlds* group exhibition (2015) at The New Art Gallery Walsall, the research uses a stage-based Action Research Process. Francis adapted this process from Action Research in pedagogy. Mills (2003) describes Action Research in teaching practice:

'Action research aims to facilitate insight, develop a teaching practice that is reactive and reflective, positively impact the school community and the educational environment, as well as help students be better learners' (iv).

Francis also developed her methodology after Action Research used in social change theory. Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) describe how this form of Action Research functions as:

'a form of collective self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of those practices and the situations in which the practices are carried out' (v).

This process enlists the notions of piloting. It follows incremental developments with reflection on resources, opportunities, and successes. It draws on the practice and writing of architect Nabeel Hamdi (vi). Hamdi advocates for an approach to developmental design which is the opposite of large-scale projects producing a trickle-down effect for communities. His work looks to use what is already present to augment existing structures, giving agency to those involved in the process and making lasting change over time. The project then has been of interest to those in urban design, architecture and urban studies as well as artists and gardeners.



**Action Research Process Diagram.**

First presented as part of the Small Worlds exhibition, 2015, where the research process to develop a disused and abandoned garden into a community asset and public green space was laid out.

## Research Context

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*Rethinking the Brownfield* investigates the potential of undeveloped brownfield sites. It involved a series of investigations, interrogations and interventions across sites in Stoke-on-Trent, UK.

The project links back to early work from 2006 onwards, which looked at regeneration initiatives and their impact on communities. This early work focused on housing renewal in post-industrial cities, and first-hand research into the regeneration sites of Stoke-on-Trent, and Liverpool, particularly looking at the designated Government Pathfinder Scheme ZoOs (Zones of Opportunity) (vii).

Early research into these sites from 2006 led to long term interest in the sites, which is the foundation of the research projects *Rethinking The Brownfield*, *Community Maker* (2015–2017) and *The Portland Inn Project* (2016–current.)

In *Rethinking the Brownfield*, this tie back to social regeneration led to Francis using Action Research to emphasise the importance of involving community perspectives and ambitions in the research planning.



**Terrace, Indefinable City Exhibition, AirSpace Gallery (2007)**

Photographic banner of semi-demolished house, Lichfield St. Stoke-on-Trent, floorplan and inventory.



## Research Context

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### Notes

- (i) Chipchase A and Frith M (2002) BROWNFIELD? GREENFIELD? The threat to London's Unofficial Countryside. A report by London Wildlife Trust on behalf of the London Brownfields Forum. LONDON WILDLIFE TRUST. Available at: <http://www.bexleywildlife.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Brownfield-Greenfield-the-threat-to-Londons-unofficial-countryside.pdf>
- (ii) Gandy, Matthew Urban wastelands – Matthew Gandy. [online] Available at: <https://www.matthewgandy.org/2019/11/02/urban-wastelands/>.
- (iii) Gandy, M. (2015). From urban ecology to ecological urbanism: an ambiguous trajectory. *Area*, 47(2), pp. 150–154.
- (iv) Mills, G. E. (2003). *Action research: A guide for the teacher researcher*. Upper Saddle River: Merrill.
- (v) Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (1988). *The action research planner* (3rd ed.). Geelong: Deakin University.
- (vi) Nabeel Hamdi (2004). *Small change: about the art of practice and the limits of planning in cities*. London ; Sterling, Va.: Earthscan.
- (vii) Parliament.uk. (2013). [online] Available at: <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN05953/SN05953.pdf>

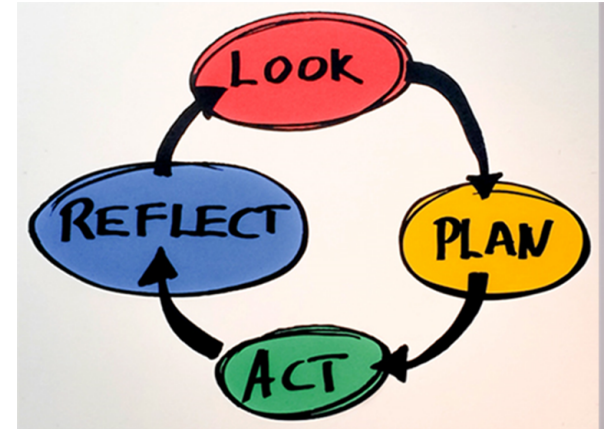
## Research Process

*Rethinking the Brownfield's* research process focused on an Action Research programme in an abandoned factory garden, *The Spode Rose Garden* project. Francis as lead artist collaborated with the artists Andrew Branscombe and Glen Stoker of AirSpace Gallery. Through the use of the Action Research methodology, the project grew to be a partnership between AirSpace Gallery and Stoke-on-Trent City Council.

This work applied participatory Action Research methods as set out by Kemmis and McTaggart, testing them in an urban development context. *Rethinking the Brownfield* has since used and refined these methods in all site investigations since 2013.

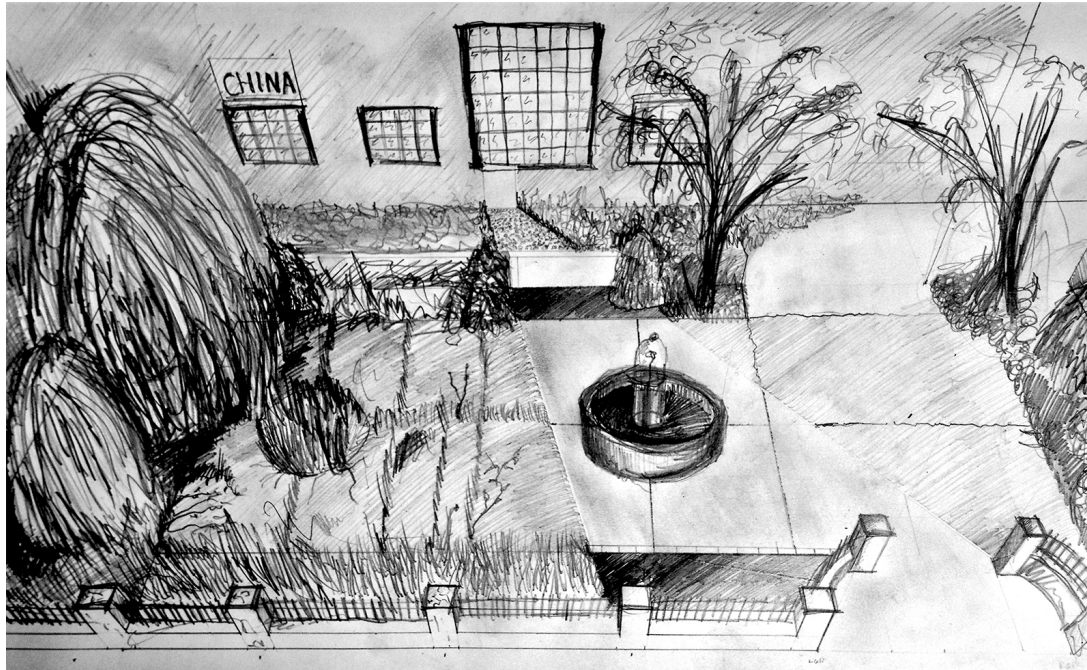
Seeking to explore how alternative approaches to participatory development can involve stakeholders to deliver sustainable grass roots change, *The Spode Rose Garden* project created an Action Research cycle:

**LOOK:** understand the site, its use and its history. This involved desk-based research into the factory and garden's histories, as well as site investigations into the garden, documentation of the current site and its plant ecology, and initial research into its current usage. This work fed into an outline intervention plan which could assemble interest and stakeholders who may work together to develop the site.



**Top: Action Research Process Diagram.**  
As presented as part of the *Small Worlds* exhibition, 2015.

**Bottom: Initial site investigation images, 2013.**



**PLAN:** The next stage of the research process involved using the initial findings to develop a plan for a pilot/physical representation of the potential future development of the site. This plan would be designed to draw attention to the site's physical potential and to engage stakeholders in longer-term redevelopment opportunities.

### **Spode Rose Garden Intervention, 2013.**

Initial Drawing of site intervention to renovate a triangular slice of the garden, which would act as a physical representation of the potential for the redevelopment of the site.



## Research Process

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**ACT:** The next stage was to enact the initial intervention at the rose garden. This involved developing a triangular cross section of the garden, and then renovating and redesigning everything within that section.

This work gave a physical demonstration of what the site could look like if developed. It reframed the space as an undervalued community resource. This intervention aimed to capture the attention of the landowner and the public, engaging both in long-term plans and change for this disused space.



### **Spode Rose Garden Intervention, 2013.**

Marking out a triangle within the garden, clearing and cleaning, repainting, then building a circular planter and planting out the triangular section.

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## Research Process

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**ACT:** In addition to the physical intervention in the garden, this stage involved collaboration with ceramic flower maker Rita Floyd. The aim was to draw correlations between the undervalued site, with its connections to the history of ceramic design and skill, and the undervalued skills of the city's many ceramic designers and makers. Reframing both the site and ceramicists' skills would show potential future purpose for these resources. Floyd then created a bone china rose to be the rose garden's emblem and a physical celebration of the garden's history and future.

This bone china rose was taken to a series of rose breeders to commission a new rose to be grown for the garden.

A crowdfunding campaign raised the money to pay Gareth Fryer, rose breeder, to develop the Spode China Rose, a living series of rose bushes based on Floyd's ceramic flower.

The rose bushes were installed in the garden in 2015 to coincide with the British Ceramics Biennial Festival, which would see around 30,000 visitors access the festival exhibition through the garden.



**Left,** Rita Floyd modelling the Spode Chine Rose in bone china, 2013.

**Near Left,** visit to Gareth Fryer's rose testing field, 2013.

**Right Top,** Test Rose in Gareth Fryer's field alongside bone china rose by Rita Floyd.

**Top Far Right,** Spode China Rose installed in the garden, 2015.

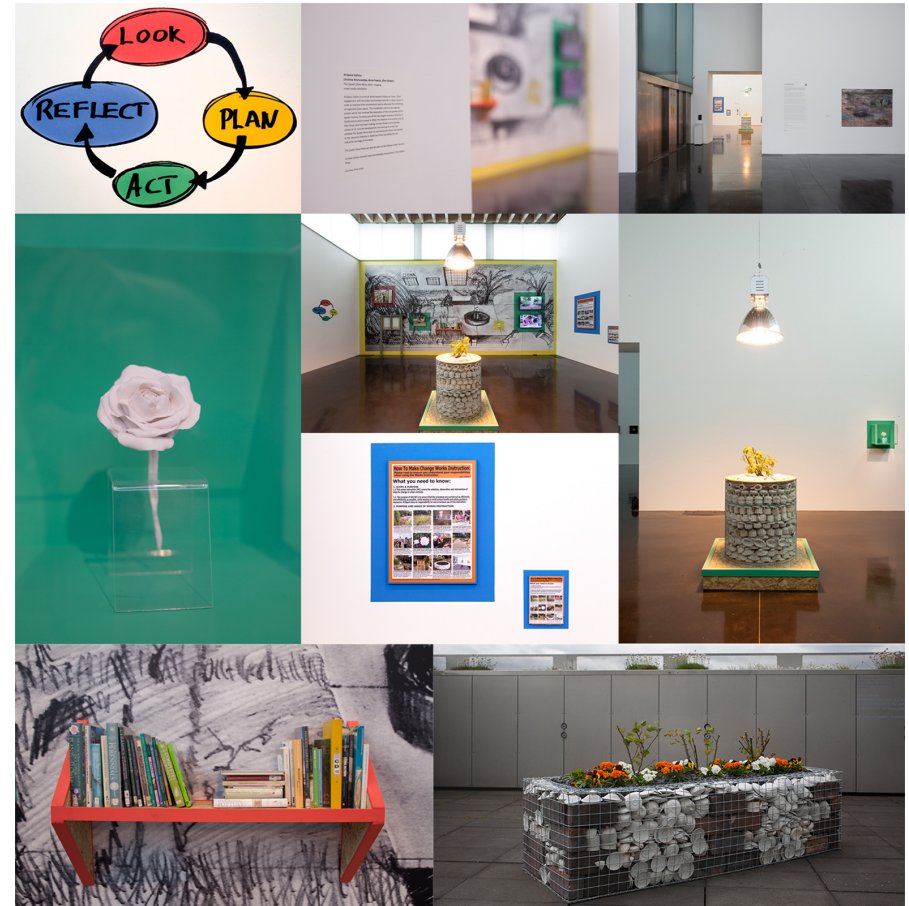


## Research Process

**REFLECT:** The next stage of the project involved sharing the initial findings and process with the public to reflect on the new possibilities arising.

The initial stages were shared through the *Small Worlds* exhibition and at BCB 2015 where the Action Research approach became part of the process to engage the public in the possible future of the garden. Colour-coding the exhibits made the Action Research process visible as part of a participatory consultation which engaged future stakeholders in the development and sustainability of the ongoing project. The Action Research process cycle diagram acted as a key to demonstrate the various stages of a participatory research process.

The exhibitions and the physical intervention at the site led to engagement from the landowner, Stoke City Council. The Council committed to work with AirSpace Gallery to secure the funding to develop the garden. A successful application to DCLG Pocket Parks resulted in an award of £16,000 to renovate the garden, at which point the Action Research process began again.



### ***The Spode Rose Garden - Small Worlds, New Art Gallery Walsall, 2015***

Exhibition as part of the Small Worlds exhibition, 2015, where the research process to develop a disused and abandoned garden into a community asset and public green space was laid out.



## Research Process

**LOOK:** Along with the exhibitions and works, Francis developed participatory consultation activities and an online survey to enable the public to contribute to the developing plans for the garden and to express interest in forming a 'Friends of' group to work together on a long-term vision for the garden.

**PLAN:** The Friends of Spode Rose Garden group formed in 2016. The group undertook volunteer work to use findings from the community consultation to create a design for the garden. At this point, the project moved from being artist led to community led.

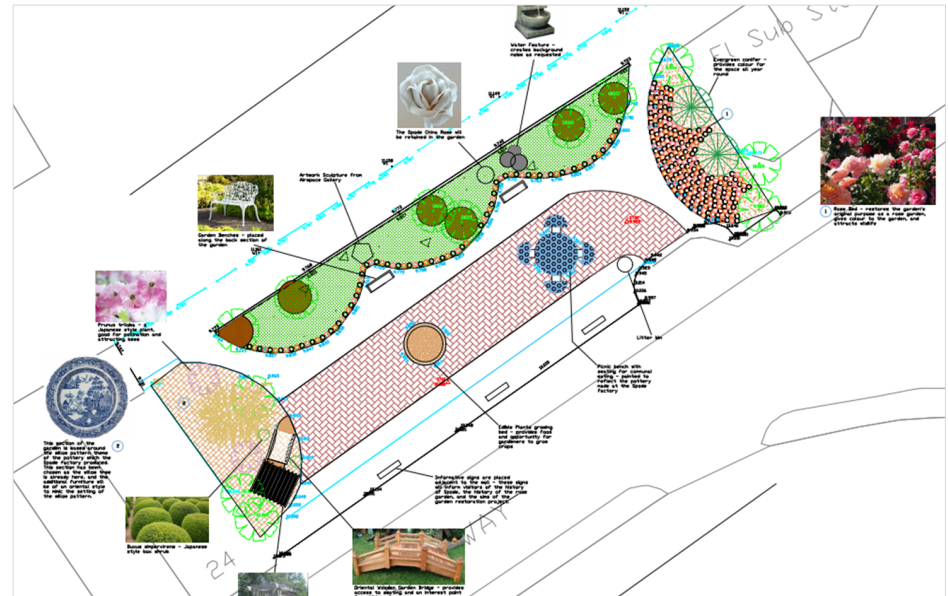


**Left, Participatory Consultation, Spode Rose Garden, 2015**

A clay activity, making plant labels to engage the public in the potential future uses for the garden, and to connect with possible stake holders for future development of the site.

**Right, Design for the Spode Rose Garden.**

The garden design considered the requests and concerns raised in the public consultation to include heritage patterns within the planting schemes and design features of the garden, as well as including seating, and edible elements.





## Research Process

**ACT:** The Friends of Spode Rose Garden worked together to develop the garden in 2016. The group collaborated to prepare and plan events to launch the garden as a new community space and resource.



**Spode Rose Garden Development Project, 2016**



## Research Process

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**ACT:** In September 2016, the rose garden was launched in as part of a larger public arts event, The Stoke Art Map, which was curated by Francis and supported by Arts Council England in partnership with Acava Studios. The garden is now open daily. Francis continues to work with The Friends of Spode Rose Garden to programme 4 public events per year and to keep an ongoing schedule of garden maintenance.



**Left**, Spode Rose Garden Launch event, Stoke Art Map, 2016  
**Middle and right**, Sunflower Event from sun-up to sundown, Solstice 2017.



## Research Process

When new sections of the garden require development, the same Action Research process is used to understand the context and to use the development to engage the wider public in the project. For example, in 2017, in developing the garden's northern border, a design was first developed with the Friends of Spode Rose Garden group. It was then displayed at RHS Tatton, disseminating the project, before it was installed permanently within the rose garden.



**Right,** Blooming Border at RHS Tatton, 2017  
**Left,** Blooming Border installed permanently in Spode Rose Garden, 2018.



## Research Process

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In January 2021, Anna Francis launched *The Living Garden*, a one-year research and development activity, which recognises that the garden is moving from development stage into a new stage that emphasises and requires sustainability. The programme aims to understand the garden's resources and assets, and aims to demonstrate how the garden can be used by a range of stakeholders.

Through a series of workshops which activate the garden, and events which bring people in to consider the garden as a resource throughout 2021, the garden will be revealed as a true space of public collaboration and participation. Alongside the workshop series, ceramic artist Joanne Mills has been commissioned to develop a brand new public art work for the garden, for and with its users.

The workshop programme aims to use all of our human senses to explore the garden's material qualities. It aims to show how brownfield can become a space for humans to come together, experience nature, relax in a green environment, and connect with trees, plants and wildlife.

Supported by Arts Council England, The Living Garden is a programme of activity in collaboration with The Friends of Spode Garden, developed by Francis and supported by AirSpace Gallery. This programme will inform a subsequent project, developed with stakeholders, to programme activity for the rose garden for 2022 – 2023.

## Research Process

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Returning to ideas around the repurposing of skills, the logo for the project was developed as a commission for ceramic designer June Branscombe, whose calligraphy and floral design skills were developed in a 40-year career in the ceramics industry working for Royal Doulton and then Crown Derby, before being made redundant in 2016.

The first workshop, held January 2021, was a scent workshop developed in collaboration with Clara Weale, of A Library of Olfactive Material, Glasgow. Participants received a set of 5 scents through the post, which were used alongside writing by Francis to share the garden's history. The once-imposing brownfield garden enabled participants to respond to anxieties about the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown by transporting them to a summer rose garden via scent.



**Left:** Project Logo, by Ceramic Designer June Branscombe, **Middle:** Participant image of posted scent pack, **Right:** Online workshop documentary photograph.



## Research Process

In addition to the *Spode Rose Garden* project, Francis has used the action research process to work on other sites across the city, making temporary interventions in order to create dialogue around their use value and suggesting interim uses for their disused land. In many cases interventions have been event based, and have involved opportunity for the public to engage in debate about the use and value of brownfield sites in post-industrial cities (see Figs. 2 and 3).

A documentary film was made to share this work to a wider audience, which has been shown in exhibitions and online.

In addition work to explore developed brownfields in the city, in order to understand the new use value of these sites and their ecological and social value, can be seen in the curatorial project *The Lost Garden* and in the collaborative research project with sculptor Andrew Branscombe titled *Birders Paradise*; a mobile research lab which travelled to open spaces around Stoke-on-Trent to gather data, identify species and deliver activities and events which created a dialogue with residents and users of the sites about wildlife in their local area. <https://www.appetite.org.uk/event/birders-paradise-by-anna-francis-andrew-branscombe-at-the-big-feast/>



**Fig 1. Birder's Paradise (2014)**  
Mobile research lab at Westport Lake, reclaimed Brownfield, Stoke-on-Trent.



**Fig 2 Brownfield Banquet: Lichfield Street (2017)**  
Public workshop and meal at the site of the Lichfield St. Housing Pathfinder renewal area, Stoke-on-Trent.



**Fig 3. Brownfield Banquet: Victoria Ground (2017)**  
Public workshop and meal at the site of the Old Victoria Football Ground, Stoke-on-Trent.

## Research Process

The *Brownfield Ikebana Project* (2012–2018) used a slightly different participatory arts process to investigate the changing nature of Brownfields and their interim ecological value to wildlife and potential as viable green space for humans. Francis used the Japanese structures of Ikebana (flower arranging) in workshops to bring people to three inner city sites, to discuss their use and purpose. Floral displays utilising salvaged and discarded objects and wayward plants growing on these sites were created in 2012, 2015 and 2018 to demonstrate how reframing material can change its perceived value.

Through visiting the sites each 3 years between 2012, 2015 and 2018, the project has enabled a documentation of the sites as they have developed naturally or been developed and built on physically.



**Fig 1. Brownfield Ikebana Artist Workshop, 2012**

A workshop to discuss the value and use of the Brownfield, AirSpace Gallery, 2012.



**Fig 2. Brownfield Ikebana Works Instruction**

Works instruction detailing how to respond to a brownfield site, using Ikebana



**Fig 3. Making 'Rethinking the Brownfield' 2018.**

Documentation of the film making process, collecting plants and materials for Brownfield Ikebana 2018.



## Research Insights

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*Rethinking the Brownfields* advocates for new approaches to considering post-industrial brownfield landscapes in the interim between demolition and redevelopment – via events, interventions and projects which reframe disused urban space. The revealed ecological value in terms of plant biodiversity was revealed via the *Brownfield Ikebana* project, as well as via events such as the *Brownfield Banquets* (2017) and *Artist Soup Kitchen – Brownfields: Sites of Specific Scientific Interest?* The film made to document the project directly addresses the need for developers to recognise the interim value of these sites to city bio-diversity, and to consider what is lost once these sites are redeveloped.

The *Spode Rose Garden* project demonstrates the development of a research methodology which uses creative and artistic intervention to test out interest and locate stakeholders, to then see permanent change made to the use of urban space, and represents an approach to long term, artist-led, public art projects.

The *Spode Rose Garden* project demonstrated that for creative intervention to lead to sustainable development, stakeholders need to be engaged early in the creative process, which gives them the opportunity to both affect and feel themselves part of the change and development.



**Rethinking The Brownfields, Film Stills.**  
Opening sequence and documentation of The Brownfield Banquet: Lichfield Street (2017).

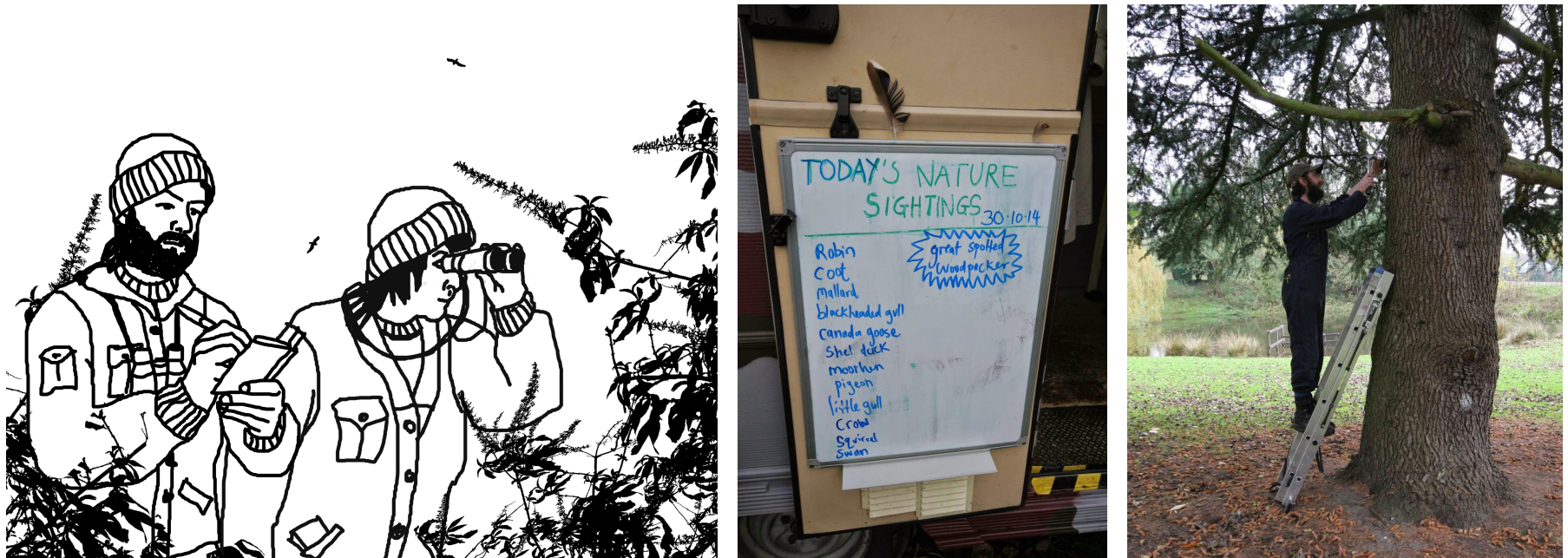


## Documentation of Outputs

### ***Birder's Paradise***

2014, *Birder's Paradise*, Public art commission at 4 sites around Stoke-on-Trent. Documentation of the research includes blog posts documenting the process, photographs of the on-site events and project proposal.

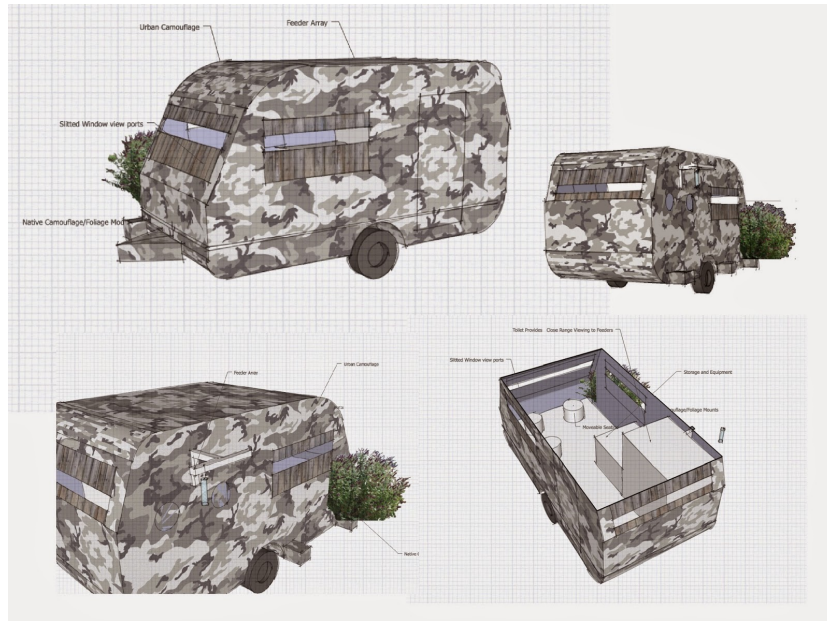
<http://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/5711/>



### **Birder's Paradise (2014)**

Proposal sketch, daily sightings board installed on Mobile Lab at Westport Lake Site, and installing a tree identification trail at Hanley Park Site.

## Documentation and Dissemination of Outputs



### **Birder's Paradise (2014)**

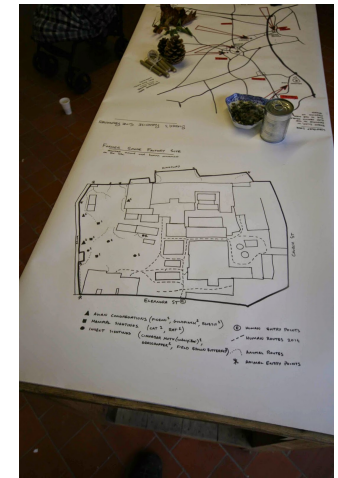
Mobile research lab at Westport Lake, reclaimed Brownfield, Stoke-on-Trent included an exhibition phase to showcase the findings of the research to the public at 3 sites.



## Documentation of Outputs

***Birder's Paradise, Journeys, Pathways and Track Plans*** Exhibition at Spode Factory, 2014.

Francis was commissioned to collaborate with Andrew Branscombe as part of the Arts Council England-funded group exhibition *Journeys, Pathways and Track Plans*. Francis and Branscombe were able to continue to explore the urban nature to be found on the Spode Factory Site, and displayed findings from the Birder's Paradise project within the exhibition. <https://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/5717/>



### **Birder's Paradise (2014)**

Urban nature tour of The Spode Factory Site as part of the Journeys, Pathways and Track Plans exhibition, installation shot showing documentary images of site, maps and artefacts salvaged from the site and documentary film.



## Documentation of Outputs

**Urban Nature Exploration Guide, Saturday Market Project (2014).**

<https://saturdaymarketproject.com/shop/593/urban-nature-exploration-guide-with-anna-francis>



### **Urban Nature Guide and urban nature tour (2014).**

Francis was commissioned to develop an urban nature guide, utilising the Victorian language of flowers as a way to notice and record the nature in our cities. For example, the flower in the above image is Buddleia, a plant traditionally associated with transformation and rebirth.

*'The Buddleia seeks out even the tiniest patch of fertile ground and creates a striking display, seemingly from nothing, just like artists. Spend some time with this plant. Record the most impressive and opportune examples here.'* The guide is cut by hand, hand-stitched and printed on drawing paper, with a textured green cover. The guide was launched at London Design Festival, 2014, with an urban nature tour led by Francis.

### ***The Spode Rose Garden***

A city intervention project, with Francis as lead artist in collaboration with artists Branscombe and Stoker. Documentation of the project includes the proposal for the RHS Tatton Blooming border and photography of the installed border, and photography of the exhibitions at BCB 2015 and *Small Worlds*, which documents the research process.

<http://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/lists/59/>



### **The Spode Rose Garden Intervention 2 (2015).**

Stage two of The Spode Rose Garden project, documentation of installation of salvaged china planter and installation of 10 specially bred Spode China Rose Bushes and companion plants, to coincide with The British Ceramics Biennial Opening, 2015.



## Documentation of Outputs

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### ***The Spode Rose Garden***, Small Worlds group exhibition at The New Art Gallery, Walsall (2015)

Exhibition demonstrating the research process used in developing an abandoned garden. The action research cycle is used as a key to the colour-coded exhibition, revealing what stage of the process each exhibited item is connected to.

<http://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/5746/>



### **The Spode Rose Garden (2015).**

Action research cycle on coloured vinyl print, salvaged ceramic planter and living rose bush with growing lamp, proposal drawing, resource library, documentary video and large print works instruction and pile of works instructions as public giveaway.

## *The Spode Rose Garden Works Instruction*

### Small Worlds Exhibition (2015).

How to Make Change Works Instruction developed for the *Small Worlds* exhibition as a large-scale print and poster takeaway. The Works Instruction is based on a found works instruction salvaged from the Spode Factory site detailing how to put a handle on a cup.

## How To Make Change Works Instruction:

Please read to ensure you understand your responsibilities when using the Works Instruction

SHEET NUMBER: 1

### What you need to know:

- SCOPE & PURPOSE**
  - 1.1 This works instruction (WI) covers the selection, observation and intervention of sites for change in urban contexts.
  - 1.2 The purpose of this WI is to ensure that the processes are carried out as efficiently and effectively as possible, while bearing in mind certain health and safety guidance measures. AirSpace take no responsibility for any erroneous use of this instruction.
- PURPOSE AND USAGE OF WORKS INSTRUCTION**



2.1 Select an urban site in need of intervention: Notice that the British Ceramics Biennial is using a disused urban garden space at the back of a once important, now closed, factory as an entrance. Consider how to intervene.



2.2 Spend some time on the site, observe, pay attention, find out all you can: Discover that the site is not currently being maintained, but that it once was - make an ecology report.



2.3 Do your research, find out the history of the site, gauge interest, make a plan: Uncover that this has been a rose garden in the past, consider how to build on this, and how to make change here, form a plan.



2.4 Engage with interested parties, pool skills, work together: Recognise that the work being done in repurposing the flower makers craft for modern artistic purposes may have relevance here, commission an English China Rose.



2.5 Engage specialists in other fields to work with you: Take the bone china rose to rose breeders to find out how a new variety can be named. Find the rose you are looking for, and draw up a contract.



2.6 Bring together the expertise of artists, artisan makers and botanists: Agree with all concerned that The Spode China Rose project will aim to reimagine, reuse and repurpose skills, spaces and people.



2.7 Return to the site to begin the process of change: Be realistic about the resources and time available, and only develop a slice of the garden, as a way to gather interest and support from others.



2.8 Carry out work on site, pay attention to detail: Clear and restore the slice of garden, build a raised bed, scrape, sweep, clear, salvage, build, pack, plant and wash down.



2.9 Unveil the project to the public: Reveal the repurposed slice of garden at the BCB 2013 - use the opportunity to showcase the Bone China Rose and to talk about the new variety growing in the field - launch a crowdfunding.



2.10 Include access points for the public to learn about your project: Put up a public noticeboard which tells people about what is happening and how they can help. This can also be useful for other site users as a way to communicate out.



2.11 If the project has a longer life span, return periodically to refresh activity, and keep momentum: When the roses are ready, return to the garden to build a second planter, and get the plants in early to give them time to grow ahead of British Ceramics Biennial 2015.



2.12 Consider what currency the project may have in an exhibition context, take opportunities to disseminate: Showcase the project in the Small Worlds Exhibition, use as a way to reflect on the learning from the project and plan next steps.

HAZARD WARNING: WHEN MAKING UNASKED FOR CHANGE, PERMISSION IS NOT ALWAYS NECESSARY



## Documentation of Outputs

***The Spode Rose Garden*** The British Ceramics Biennial 2015, Stoke-on-Trent, UK (2015). <http://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/5747/>



### **The Spode Rose Garden (2015).**

Action research cycle on coloured vinyl print, salvaged ceramic planter and living rose bush with growing lamp, proposal drawing, resource library, documentary video and large print works instruction and pile of works instructions as public giveaway.

## Documentation of Outputs

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***The Spode Rose Garden*** Blue Italian Blooming Border, RHS Tatton, UK (2017).

<http://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/5748/>



### **The Spode Rose Garden at RHS Tatton, 2017.**

Development of a new border for the Rose Garden, shown at RHS Tatton 2017 before being installed permanently within the rose garden, with planting based on the Spode China Pattern 'Blue Italian'. The display was awarded a Silver-gilt Medal.  
Metal frame, ceramic tiles, hand built ceramic planters made using Spode moulds, and plants.



## Documentation of Outputs

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***Brownfield Ikebana***, a body of work which included workshops, demonstrations and exhibitions, documentation includes photographs and a short video of a performance.



**Brownfield Ikebana:** Greyhound Track Photographic Print and postcard (2015) and Making of Brownfield Ikebana (2018).

## Documentation of Outputs

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**Brownfield Ikebana** - *Cryopreservation: Need Flowers Tomorrow?* group exhibition at SYSON Gallery, Nottingham, UK. (2015)  
(<http://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/5701/> )



**Brownfield Ikebana:** salvaged vessels and plants, Japanese Kenzan and 6 X printed postcard giveaway.



## Documentation of Outputs

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***Brownfield Ikebana***, performance and exhibition at Manchester Contemporary Art Fair (2018)  
<https://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/6178>



### **Brownfield Ikebana, 2018**

Photographic prints, found vessel and plants, Japanese Kenzan and postcard giveaway. Performance demonstrating the techniques of Ikebana.

## Documentation of Outputs

***Brownfield Ikebana***, Manchester Contemporary Art Fair (2018)  
Installation shot, photographic prints, found vessel and plants,  
Japanese Kenzan and postcard giveaway.





## Documentation of Outputs

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***The Lost Gardens of Stoke-on-Trent.*** Public Art event, Stoke-on-Trent, UK (2016).

<http://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/5541/>



**The Lost Gardens of Stoke-on-Trent, video still and installation shot of *A Garden in a Weekend* by Joanne Ayre and The Clay Comrades (2016).**

A public art festival designed and curated by Anna Francis at Stoke-on-Trent's largest reclaimed brownfield, which was redeveloped via the 1986 National Garden Festival. Documentation includes event map and documentary video.

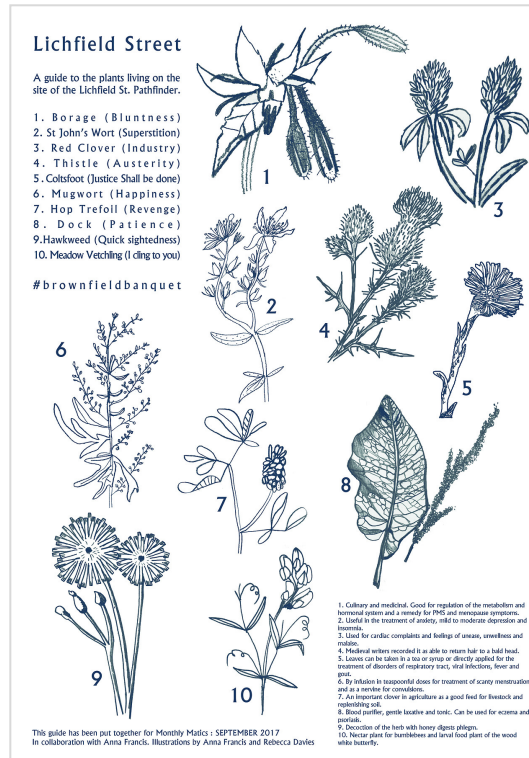




## Documentation of Outputs

### **Brownfield Banquet** and **Eco-Report** posters (2017)

<https://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/5699/> and <https://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/5700/>



### **Brownfield Eco-Report: Victoria Ground and Brownfield Eco-Report Lichfield Street (2017)**

The *Brownfield Banquets* took place at two brownfield sites in Stoke-on-Trent, 2017, and aimed to challenge fearful perceptions of brownfield sites as spaces of potential threat and danger. Documentation includes eco-report posters made collaboratively by Francis and Davies, plus an essay read at Brownfield Banquet 1 and disseminated as a public giveaway in poster form.

## Documentation of Outputs

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***The Brownfield Research Centre*** exhibition and residency, AirSpace Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent (2018).

Documentation includes photography of exhibition installation, and events within the programme.

<http://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/5713/>



**Brownfield Ikebana: Greyhound Track and Nettle Jelly (2018).**

Photographic documentation of making processes.



## Documentation of Outputs

***Rethinking the Brownfield***, Treeline Exhibition, Vivid, Birmingham (2018)

<http://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/5712/>



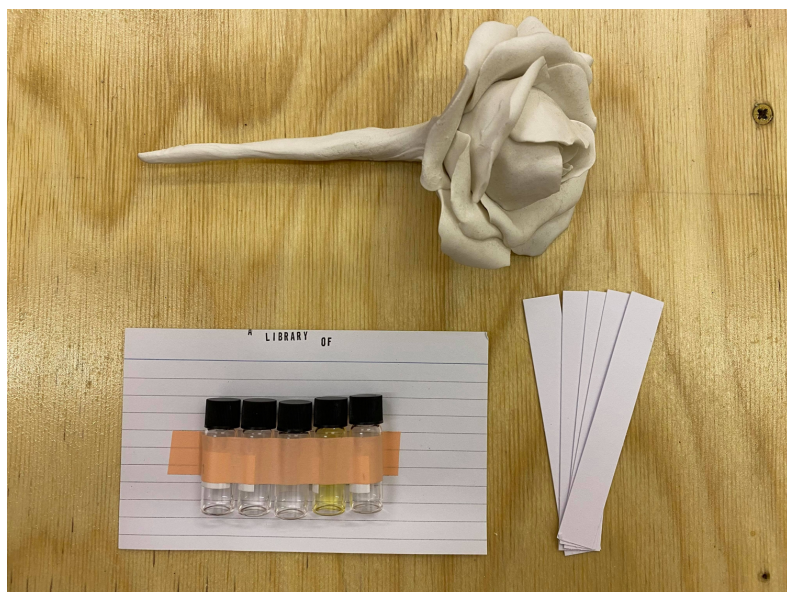
*Rethinking the Brownfield* installation, film, eco-reports, essay poster and photographic postcard giveaway.

## Documentation of Outputs

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***The Living Garden***, an Arts Council-funded programme of activity for Spode Rose Garden, curated by Francis.

<https://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/6782/>



*The Smell of The Rose Garden Workshop*, January 2021 – an online workshop to launch the year long *The Living Garden* research and development project. Documentation includes event images, a video clip, and content written for the workshop.



## Dissemination: Exhibitions

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- ***Birder's Paradise***, *Journeys, Pathways and Track Plans* Exhibition at Spode Factory, Stoke-on-Trent, UK (2014).  
<https://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/5717>
- ***The Spode Rose Garden***, *Small Worlds* group exhibition at The New Art Gallery, Walsall, UK (2015).  
<http://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/5746>
- ***The Spode Rose Garden*** The British Ceramics Biennial 2015, Stoke-on-Trent, UK (2015).  
<http://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/5747>
- ***The Spode Rose Garden*** Blue Italian Blooming Border, RHS Tatton, UK (2017).  
<http://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/5748>
- ***Brownfield Ikebana*** - *Cryopreservation: Need Flowers Tomorrow?* group exhibition at SYSON Gallery, Nottingham, UK (2015).  
<http://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/5701>
- ***Brownfield Ikebana***, performance and exhibition at Manchester Contemporary Art Fair, UK (2018).  
<https://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/6178>
- ***The Lost Gardens of Stoke-on-Trent***. Public Art event, Stoke-on-Trent, UK (2016).  
<http://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/5541/>
- ***The Brownfield Research Centre*** exhibition and residency, AirSpace Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent (2018).  
<http://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/5713/>

## Dissemination: Conferences, Symposia and Workshops.

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- ***Brownfield Banquet 1 and 2***, commissioned to support 2 x public events and one essay, and to produce collaboration on 2 x eco-report posters on Stoke-on-Trent brownfields as part of Rebecca Davies's Arts Council-funded research and development project (2017). <https://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/5699/> and <https://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/5700/>
- ***Wayward Walks***, commissioned to develop and deliver nature audit and public workshops for the *British Ceramics Biennial* (2015). <https://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/5714/>
- ***Nordic Geographers Meeting 2015***, conference presentation on Brownfield Ikebana, Tallinn, Estonia (2015). <https://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/5514/>
- ***The Art of Dwelling***, invited speaker at IXIA and In Certain Places conference on Public Art Now, Birmingham (2015). <https://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/5513/>
- ***Artist Soup Kitchen – Brownfields: Sites of Specific Scientific Interest?***, Professional development event for artists and scientists at AirSpace Gallery and Greyhound Track Brownfield, Stoke-on-Trent (2018). <https://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/6751/>
- ***The Smell of The Rose Garden***, online workshop, a collaborative participatory event with Anna Francis and Clara Weale of A Library of Olfactive Material, as part of The Living Garden Project (2021). <https://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/6782/>