

Participatory Arts Project

Brief Evaluation

MURAL



These questions come courtesy of Culture Health & Wellbeing Alliance's report "How creativity and culture is supporting shielding and vulnerable people at home during Covid-19."

[bravebolddrama.co.uk](https://www.culturehealthandwellbeing.org.uk/how-creativity-and-culture-are-supporting-shielding-and-vulnerable-people-home-during-covid-19)

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Summary of Project

We secured a £15,000 Arts Council project funding for our community arts centre Creative Workspace in Withywood. This funding included scope for 4 local artists to apply for part-funded residencies called COG (Creative Opportunity Giver) residencies. Artists were given free access to our main studio space for one week, and were also funded to develop and deliver community engagement workshops with local people.

One of these artists was mural artist Amy Hutchings. She led design workshops with young people at Merchants Academy, developed a final design that was an amalgam of as many contributions as possible, and painted the final design on an external wall of Creative Workspace in Withywood. Additional stencilling details were added by young people. The mural is called "Nothing is Impossible".



Funder/s: Arts Council England

Who was it for? Students aged 14-15 who attend Merchants' Academy school in Withywood.

What outcomes were we aiming for? To include local young people in the design and execution of a new mural on public display on a building close to their school.

Where did it happen? The initial design workshop happened at Merchants' Academy during school hours, there was also one follow-up workshop and one painting session that happened after school at Creative Workspace.

Were you working in partnership? We worked in partnership with Merchants' Academy, in particular with the Head of Art there, and with the commissioned artist Amy Hutchings. We operated as producers for this project, supporting Amy Hutchings administratively to ensure she could deliver the workshops and paint sessions successfully. We also purchased the required paint for the mural.

How many people took part? 80 students attended the initial design session at Merchants' Academy. 6 students opted to attend the two after-school workshops at Creative Workspace where the design was refined and finally painted onto the building.

For how long did it happen? The workshops and the painting all happened in June 2019. We started arranging it from early May 2019. The PE teacher who had participated on the Dance project with us from Jan-March 2019 helped our emails get to the right Art teacher.

What were the main outcomes? 80 students from Merchants' Academy made an artistic expression that improved their immediate local environment. At point of writing (Sept 2020) the mural remains pristine. Despite being open to public access at all times, the mural has faced no vandalism. It's situated off road, and local younger children regularly play in front of it. We hope the message "Nothing Is Impossible" inspires them.

Feedback: *"Arts Award is great because you choose what to study. It's the opposite of school! I love photography. Arts Award is a great opportunity to put my skills into practice and try something new. Arts Award is broadening my horizons. I spend lots of time illustrating. It's great I can get a qualification doing something I love."* (The students)

"Selling her work has done wonders for her confidence. She was absolutely thrilled that people she'd never even met wanted to buy her work." (Parent of a student)

What were the challenges and successes? Setting up this project was administratively much simpler because of the Dance project with the same school meaning we could use existing contacts. We wanted to run more workshops within the school after 80 young people turned up to the first one (we were expecting about 20 max), but the school couldn't rapidly change plans to hand over more curriculum time to the project, otherwise more students would have been able to paint the final mural.

Links to further information: <https://bravebolddrama.co.uk/community/youngpeople.html>
<https://www.bristol247.com/news-and-features/news/new-community-mural-painted-in-withywood/>