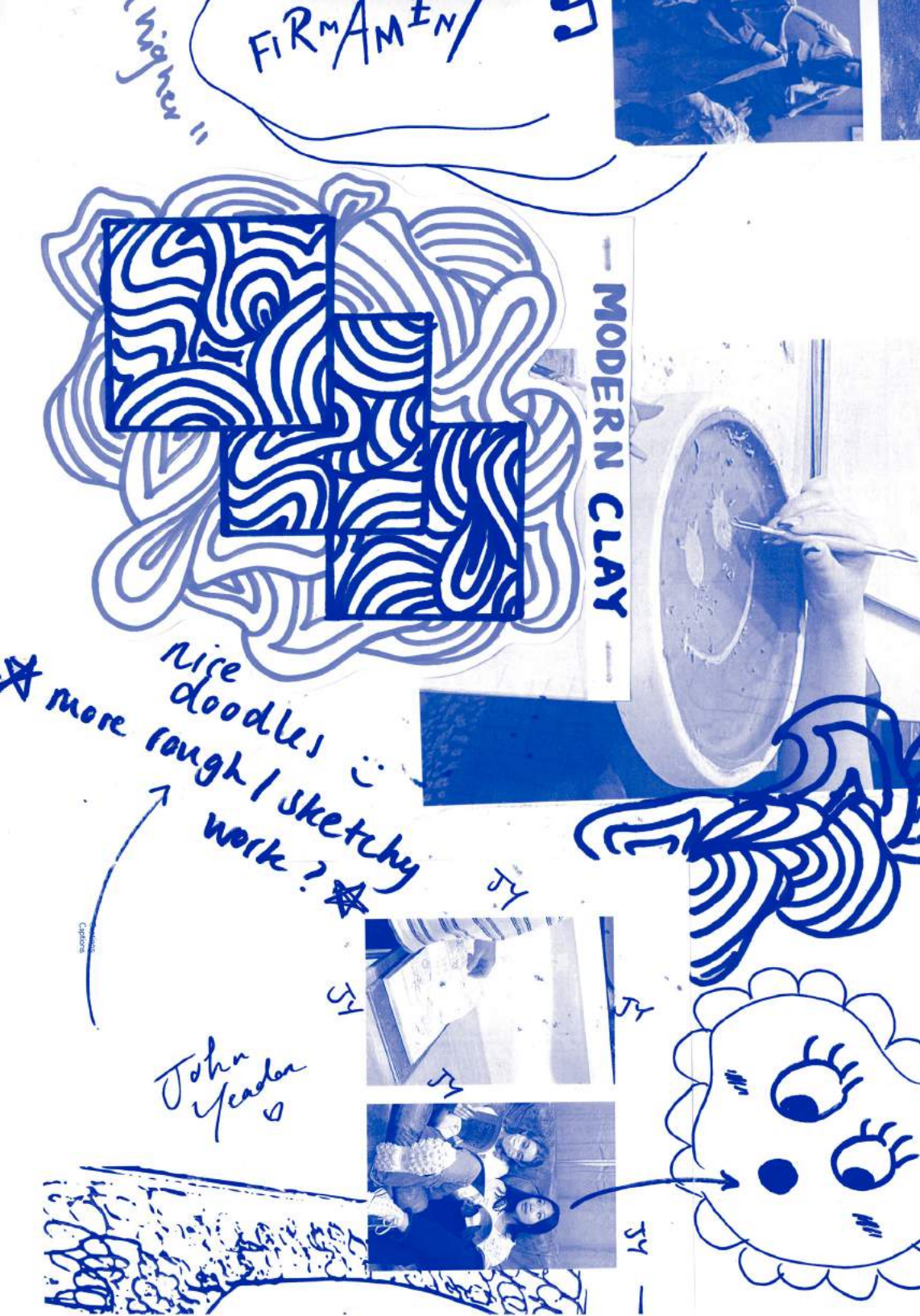


I Y P

i y u p

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IKON YOUTH PROGRAMME AND SLOW BOAT 2021 / 22

WHY SOMETIMES I'VE
BELIEVED AS MANY AS
SIX IMPOSSIBLE THINGS
BEFORE BREAKFAST

With the support of Freelands Foundation, over three years (2021-24) Ikon Youth Programme (IYP) navigates the waterways, collaborating with creative thinkers and makers to reimagine *Slow Boat* as a local art school.

Set against the backdrop of funding cuts to arts education, we are expanding the alternative curriculum offered by IYP, raising fundamental questions concerning the definition and relevance of art.

This publication includes documentation from the first year of the project (2021/22).

IKON

 Freelands
Foundation



Firmament performed by IYP with Jaz Morrison, Word Life Corral and Millicent James, 2021.

C o n t e n t s



Foreword		9
Introduction		21
Making	with Modern Clay	27
Thinking	with Tara Johnston-Comerford	33
Making	with Jaz Morrison	39
Thinking	with John Yeadon	47
Making	with School of Jewellery	51
Thinking	with Jennie Guy and Mit Jai Inn	55
Making	with Felicity Allen	61
Thinking	with De'Anne Crooks	67
Making	with Tat Vision	71
Thinking	with Ryan Christopher	75
Making	with Betsy Bradley	79
Thinking	with Monica Perez Vega	89
First year review		93



Foreword

Support from Freelands Foundation confirms our belief as young people that an alternative arts education is integral to our learning. We hope to generate new ways of thinking that will result in positive conversations with art schools, transforming social narratives and building on radical histories that reflect our everyday experiences. We are all looking forward to the future discourse around this project, including the changing space of Slow Boat; a space of provocation, a space of transformation, a space of us.

Ikon Youth Programme

This book forms part of the evaluation of *Slow Boat*, a project produced with and for Ikon Youth Programme (IYP), supported by Freelands Foundation (2021-24). With focus on *Slow Boat's* first year, it includes documentation of IYP's dialogues with a community of artists, teachers and educators.

The project started during the Covid-19 lockdown, making its motion all the more extraordinary. It was not possible for IYP to meet on *Slow Boat* – a 72-foot canal boat that navigates the West Midlands waterways – instead streaming weekly sessions online. With the support of Black Hole Club, a Birmingham based artists' collective at Vivid Projects, IYP began to imagine *Slow Boat* as a local art school – where an Arts and Crafts philosophy is adopted to overcome a sense of alienation – presenting a radical proposition during the pandemic. The results of their digital publication, *Ping Pong*, edited by artist and academic Cathy Wade and designed by Keith Dodds, are published here.

Slow Boat's launch coincided with Ikon's exhibition of Keith Piper's *A Ship Called Jesus (Redux)* (2021), a video that considers the complex relationship between the Christian Church and people of African descent. IYP used the boat as a space to collaborate with artist Jaz Morrison on *Firmament*, a performance of choral music, exploring the movement of the Black Diaspora across sea, sky and

land. The boat was then used as a studio by artist Felicity Allen to continue her series of *Dialogic Portraits* with Sasha Ndlovu, a public service student and member of Migrant Voice. *Slow Boat* continued on its journey to the Coventry Canal Basin, where IYP met artist John Yeadon who taught Piper and other members of the Blk Art Group at Coventry School of Art in the late 1970s.

Yeadon's arts education started in the 1960s with a Pre-Diploma at Burnley Municipal College and School of Art, followed by a Diploma at Hornsey College of Art and an MA from the Royal College of Art. A painter and printmaker, who has also worked in banner-making, theatre design, digital media and music, his seminar focused on sketchbooks and the question "where do ideas come from?" This enquiry was carried into later sessions with artists De'Anne Crooks and Ryan Christopher who, like Piper, play with the spoken and visual language of the church in their moving image works.

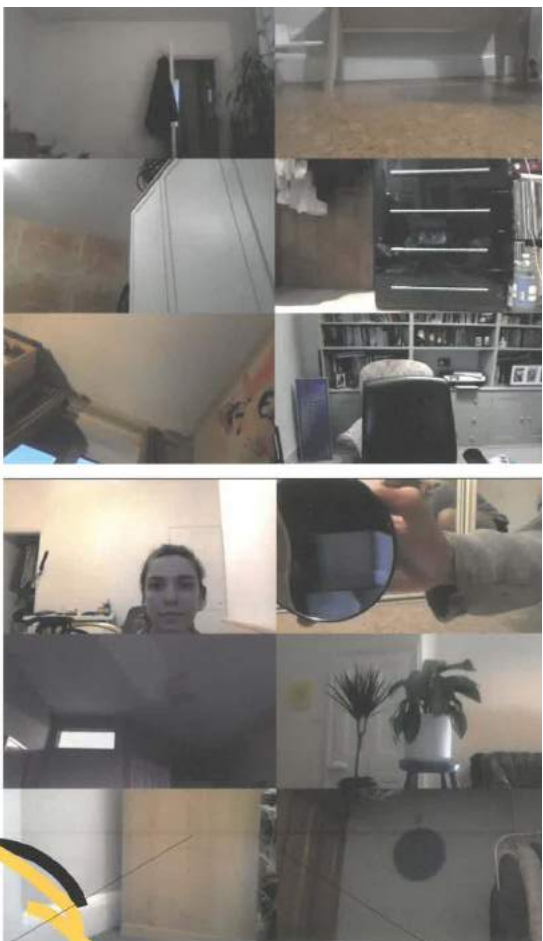
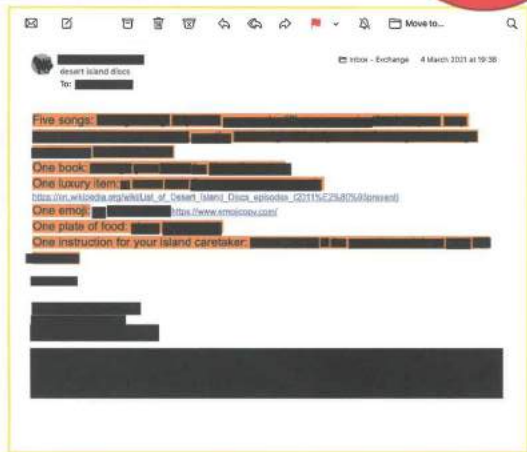
The Midlands is full of churches and art schools built in the Victorian and Edwardian era, many of which are accessible via the canal. In exploring this architectural heritage, IYP is introduced to various histories, materials and processes, including painting, sculpting, printmaking, ceramics and glassblowing. Just as local art schools of the 19th & 20th centuries provided formative educational experiences for artists, designers, educators and activists, we see *Slow Boat* playing this role for many more young people now.

IYP had a series of workshops with Modern Clay, a ceramic studio run on co-operative membership, based by the Grand Union Canal in Digbeth. The sessions, led by artists Joanne Masding and Laurie Ramsell, allowed IYP to experiment with vessel-building, coiling and pinch pottery. They then took up residence in Birmingham School of Jewellery, established in 1890 as a branch



Item	Value	Adjustments
Mediocre harp playing	At least one high-five	
Obsessive guilt	£200	
Obnoxiously high self-esteem	A nervous laugh and swift subject change	EEEE
Bad trombone playing	Social media likes and reactions	
A love of dusting skirting boards	Literally nothing	
Rapid cycling mood swings	Balance of both an amazing personality and a terrible time	
Bad at video games	Wastes approx. 10 hours and £20 per game	the ability to write noob in peoples DMs

Desert Island Caretakers

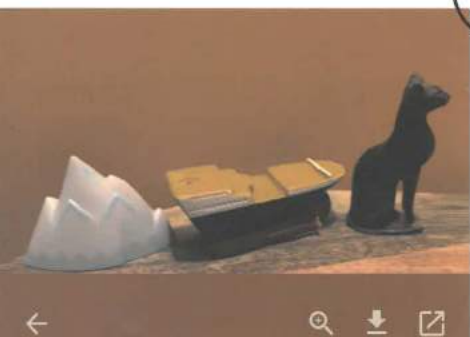


to Everyone

Rosa P and Alis: Dueting.



Intendimensional bailiffs



IYP and BHC, *Ping Pong*, 2021.



IYP members experimenting with painting tools, 2021.

of the School of Art in the city's Jewellery Quarter. Workshops, facilitated by artists Dauvit Alexander, Mahroz Hekmati and Andrew Marriott, introduced participants to the technical processes of wax carving, sand-casting with pewter, enamelling and wirework with precious metals.

With *Slow Boat* in storage for winter, IYP took inspiration from an Ikon exhibition by Mit Jai Inn, titled *Dreamworld*, drawing on his indigenous heritage as a descendent of the Tai Khun who acted as silversmiths to the Thai royal court. An exhibition at Ikon Gallery of paintings by the Renaissance artist Carlo Crivelli led IYP to consider the decorative arts in the region, including Edward Burne-Jones' stained glass windows at St Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham.

It was the artist Betsy Bradley who alerted IYP to 'miraculous everyday phenomena' through her Ikon exhibition, *Chasing Rainbows*. With an MFA from Birmingham School of Art, Bradley often paints with brushes taller than herself and involving her whole body in the mark-making. Inspired by Eastern and Western schools, of Wabi Sabi, Arte Povera and Mono-ha, she celebrates chance as a means of freeing her artistic process and the viewer's experience. Through a series of workshops, Bradley shared her technique with IYP who, together with designer Laura Jaunzems, created a radical new paint job for *Slow Boat's* exterior. The flashes of colour across *Slow Boat* give it a 'dazzle' intended to mislead sceptics of its course. With the historic closure of regional art schools and present day removal of art from school curriculums, *Slow Boat* offers young people an alternative to mainstream education and a means of creative expression.

Sessions with educators Jennie Guy and Tara Johnston-Comerford equipped IYP with exercises to bring art back into the classroom. Artist Monica Perez-Vega started an afterschool

club at Small Heath Leadership Academy, working with Laura Reid, Head of Art, and Leah Furey, Art Technician, to reinstate the school's kilns.

IYP has edited this publication in a way that demonstrates the care they have for their extended community and environment. With the support of Rosie Abbey, IYP Coordinator and Dharmendra Parmar, *Slow Boat* Coordinator, they have carried this project through its first year, refusing to compromise or change in their conviction that all young people should have access to the arts. At the end of this first year, we see some members naturally move on, handing the curation of *Slow Boat* over to their peers. Hence, the pages of this book double up as a sketchbook, for IYP to continue plotting *Slow Boat's* journey over the next two years.

Linzi Stauvers, Head of Learning, Ikon



IYP at *Slow Boat* Launch, 2021.

I n t r o d u c t i o n



IYP is a collective of young artists sharing, exploring and experiencing contemporary art. One of the environments IYP occupies is *Slow Boat*, a transformative space that is continually redefined by the group.

The last year has been full of adventures and opportunities to connect with art spaces and collaborate with artists, teachers and educators. These shared experiences have been integral in bringing IYP together and have inspired conversations about *Slow Boat* as an alternative art school.

Being part of IYP has been invaluable for viewing the intricacies of contemporary art, allowing members behind the scenes access to Ikon Gallery's programme.

It has meant a great deal to me to have the unique opportunity to be a part of IYP. I will continue to treasure the connections and experiences of this time; they are fundamental to who I am.

Through the support of IYP the arts have been accessible in a way that I couldn't have imagined, an experience I am sure will carry through to future generations of IYP. I look forward to seeing how this space transforms and the impact it will have.

Muskeen Liddar, Ikon Youth Programme Member

I'm just going to say a few words.

I've spent a lot of my time recently, waiting - mostly for trains, and visitors to view the work in the Ikon galleries, and in this process of waiting I imagined different encounters of what Slowboat meant, thinking now, perhaps this is what Slowboat is... a physical realisation of what it is to wait.

Slowboat is a space where we can ^{realise} ~~rehearse~~ our future selves, re-imagine and actualise narratives. A rehearsal space where we can mess up, provoke and transform pre-existing structures.

Through this new project we are interested in what Slowboat, travelling on the canals will become.

I hope the ~~boat~~ activities and ideas we share and hold, have the ability to disrupt and shift Birmingham's tectonics, ~~or~~ - through shifting the silent waters, ~~of~~ Birmingham's canals ~~to become~~ become fragmented, allowing us to explore new ideas, new narratives, and new lands ~~that these tectonic movements help move to the surface~~ ^{where}.

New lands which we can be ^{anything} ~~placed~~ on. A fluidity that is never still, ~~as the waves beneath it with~~ ^{and they} move.

we would like to thank black hole club who we collaborated with earlier in the year, voyaging ~~and~~ ^{or} learning how to reuse, and disrupt repetitive cycles of digital technologies.

We would also want to thank James, who took us on last year, James has a busy timetable yet always made time and space for us to exist together as a group.

Slowboat is ~~where~~ a becoming of who we are, where we live our futureselves and a becoming of who we might ~~become~~.

a future that is never pre-determined by current tectonic lands, but made by our own circumstances.





IYP in a practical session with Betsy Bradley, 2022.



IYP at Artes Mundi, Cardiff, 2021.

MODERN CLAY



Making plates at Modern Clay, 2021.



Modern Clay is a co-operative ceramics studio run by seven artist and maker members. IYP joined Modern Clay for a series of workshops to learn techniques for making with clay in response to Modern Clay's prompts for exploratory making.

By coiling, extruding, pinching, slab-building, sgraffito-ing, sculpting, press-moulding, rolling, scoring and slipping, sanding, glazing and firing, IYP made plates, vessels, portraits, shakers, dishes, musical instruments, mugs, coasters, decorations, icons, sculptures, gifts and pots.

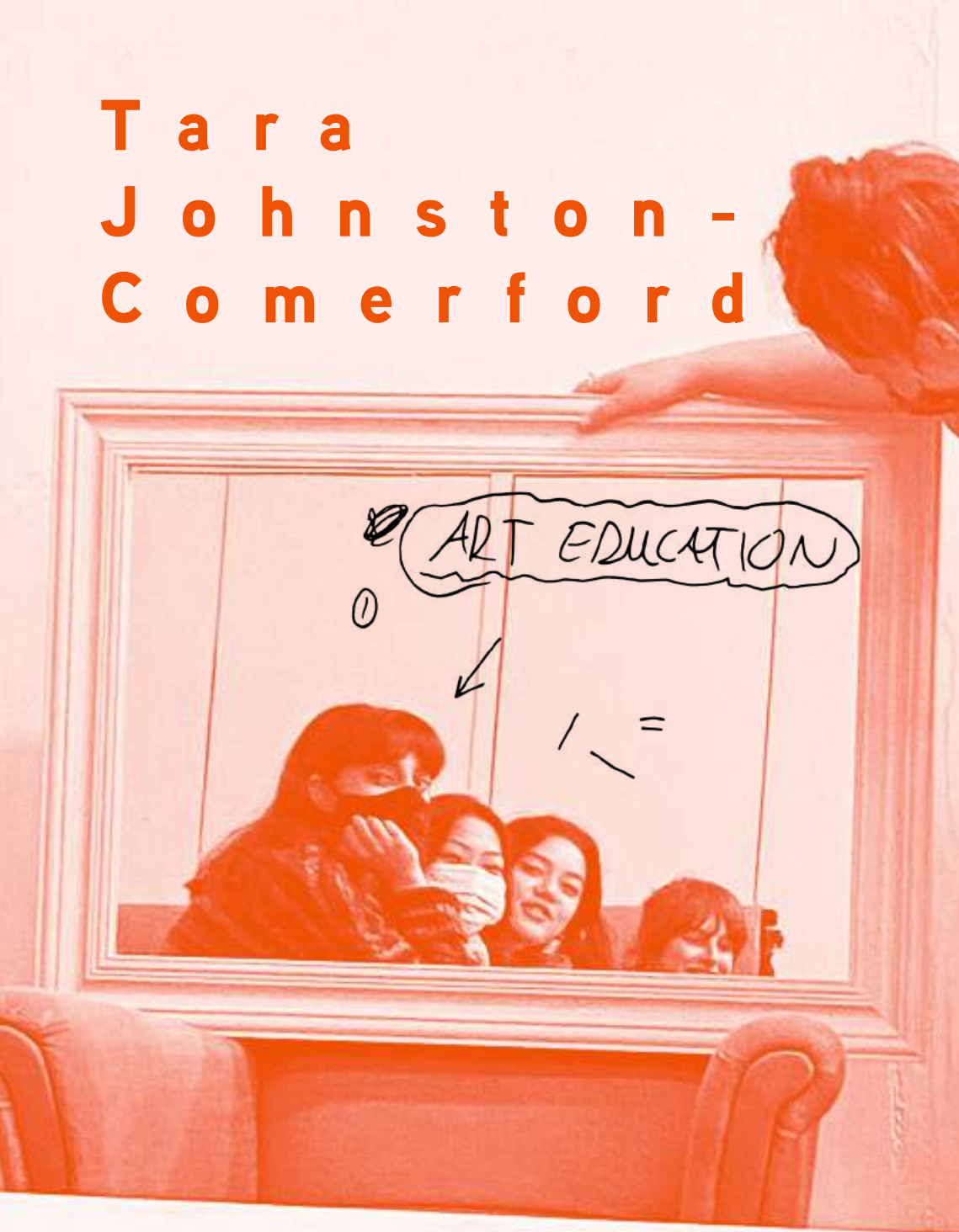
We've been enthused and excited by both the resulting ceramic wares that have come out of our kiln, and what IYP brought to the sessions themselves: by being bold, imaginative and focused artists.

My very first IYP experience was at Modern Clay which I really enjoyed because it was my first time working with clay and real clay materials. It ~~was~~ took me a while to find my way there but eventually I figured it out and it was worth it because I found that I can work with clay pretty quickly I made multiple objects such as a musical instrument, a plate, a cup etc. We were given a lot of freedom to create what we wanted to and I found it a great time and great perfect opportunity to meet the other youths that attend IKON.





Tara Johnston - Comerford



IYP with Tara Johnston-Comerford, 2021.

I had a great chat with IYP about arts education. It was brilliant to work with such a vocal and thoughtful group. Through them I (re)learned that making can wait. That questions, dreaming and laughing are as important parts of the process as doing. Always (re)learning.

What does arts education look like?

What does it feel like?

Could it have a smell, a taste, a touch? Should it?

Who's in the room when we educate artists?

Who's left out?

How do institutions measure how much arts education someone has?

Why do they do this?

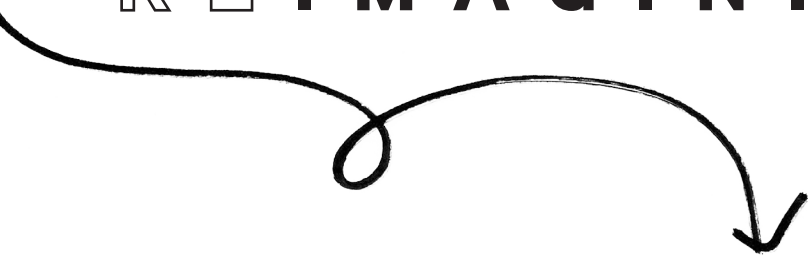
Is it useful?

Is it fair?

What would a good measuring tape for arts education look like?



REIMAGINING

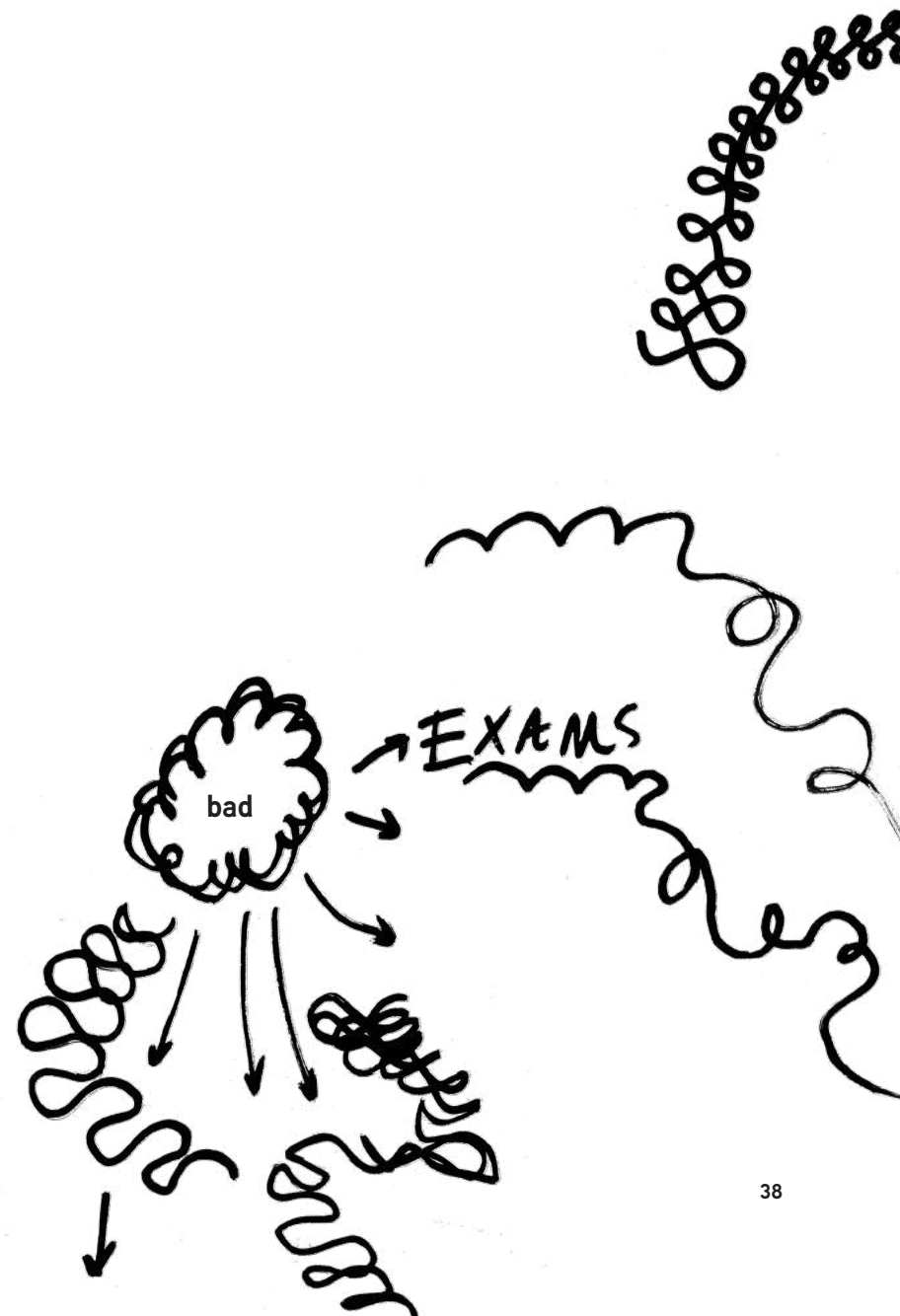
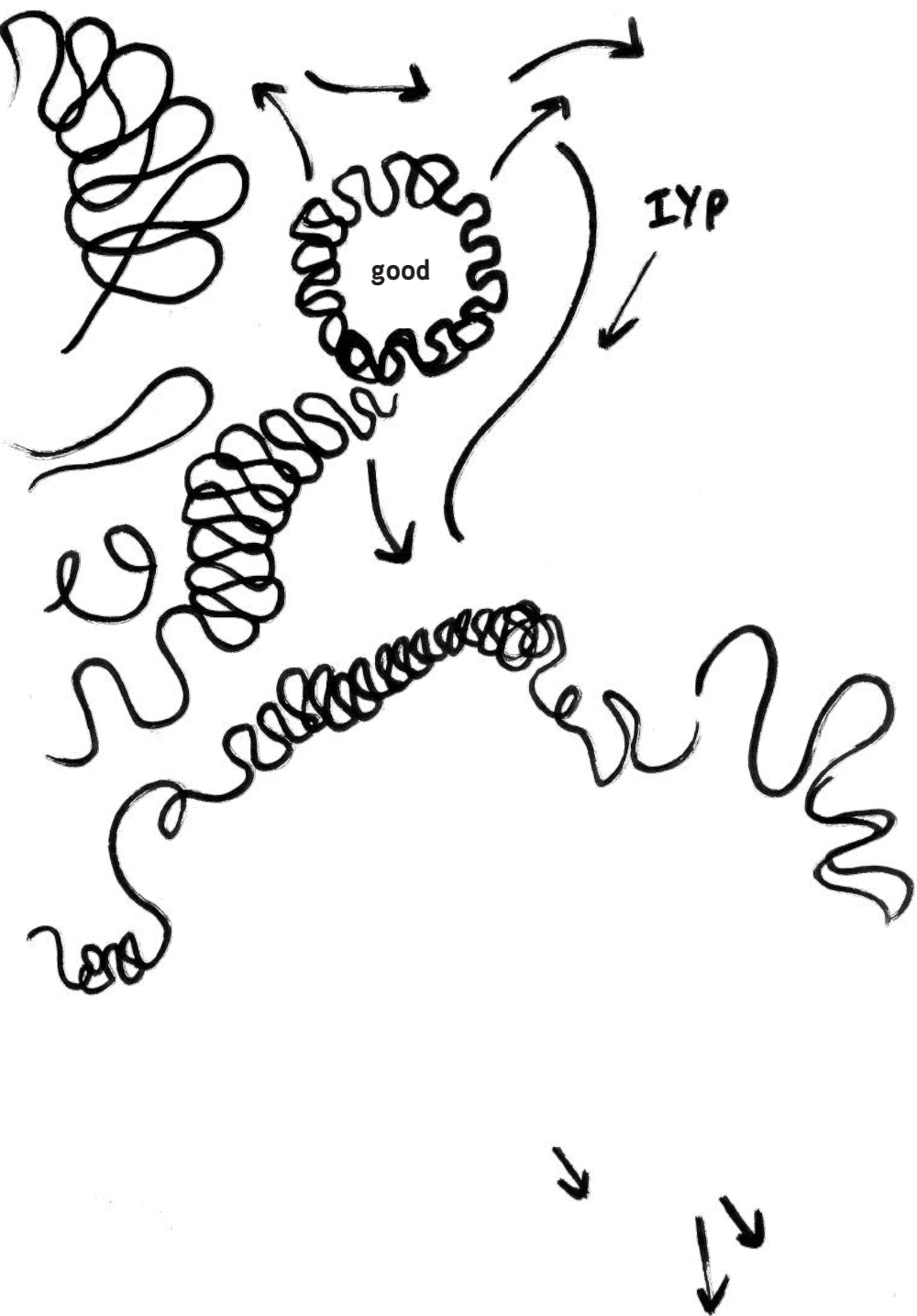


a r t s



EDUCATION





JAZ MORRISON



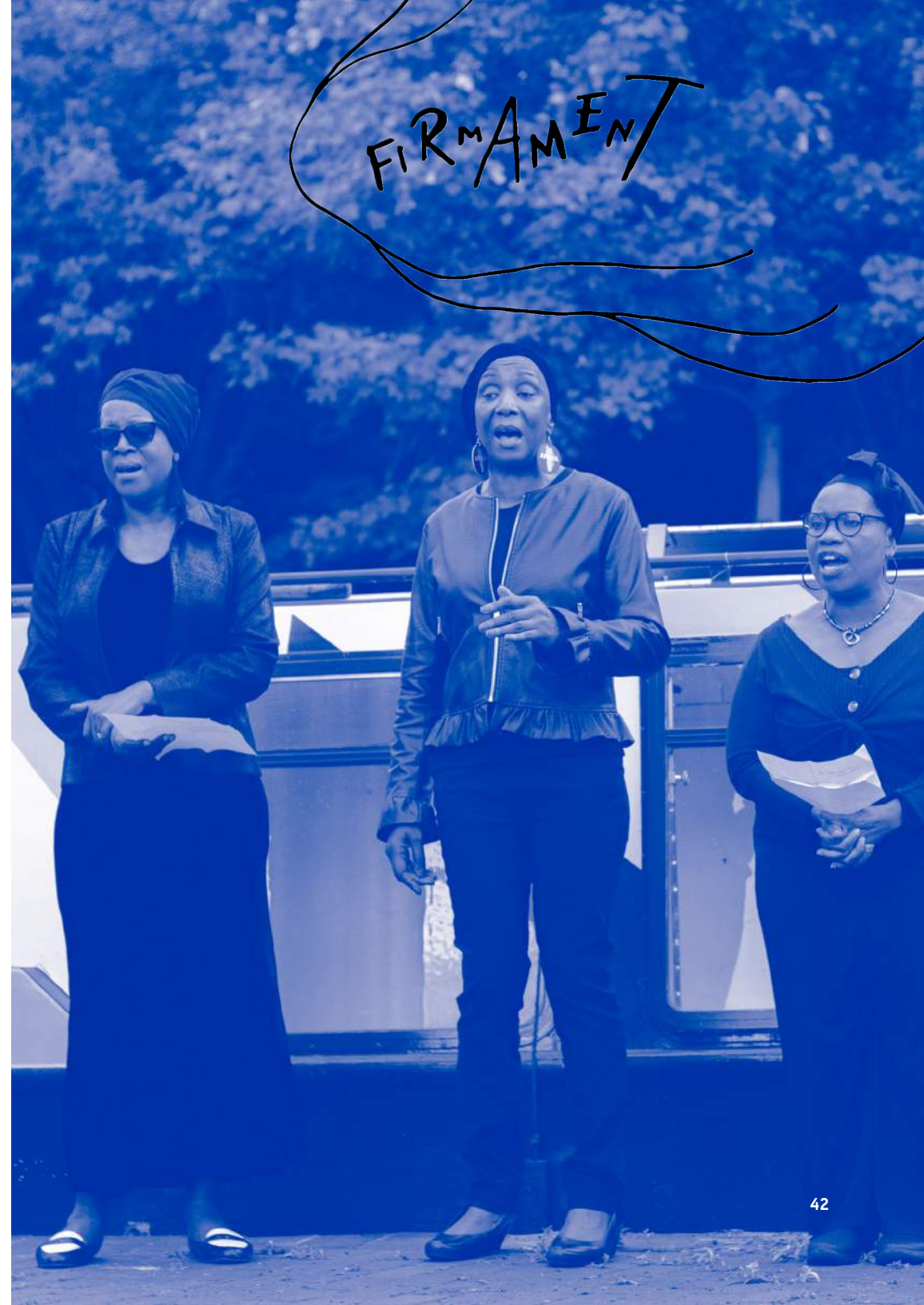
Jaz Morrison performing *Firmament* at The Migrant Festival 2021. Photo by Fábio Jorge Calundungo

Artist Jaz Morrison and IYP collaborated with the Word Life Corral and musician Millicent James in response to Keith Piper's video *A Ship Called Jesus (Redux)* (2021).

From it came *Firmament* – a hymn-style funeral song paying homage to the ancestors of the Black Diaspora; and *In Loving Memory of Errol (ILMO Errol)*, a zine responding to Piper's and Morrison's work, as well as related themes.

Firmament was performed at Ikon's 2021 Migrant Festival, in front of *Slow Boat*, docked at Minerva Works. IYP used the repetitive folding of sheets as a reference to 'mundane acts' being 'valuable' or 'reverent' for moving our lives forward.

ILMO Errol was stylised as a funeral pamphlet, documenting the whole project and featuring responses from the wider community. IYP's submissions reflect their range of talent and perspective – from the inclusion of the Lord's Prayer to Mr Peanut!



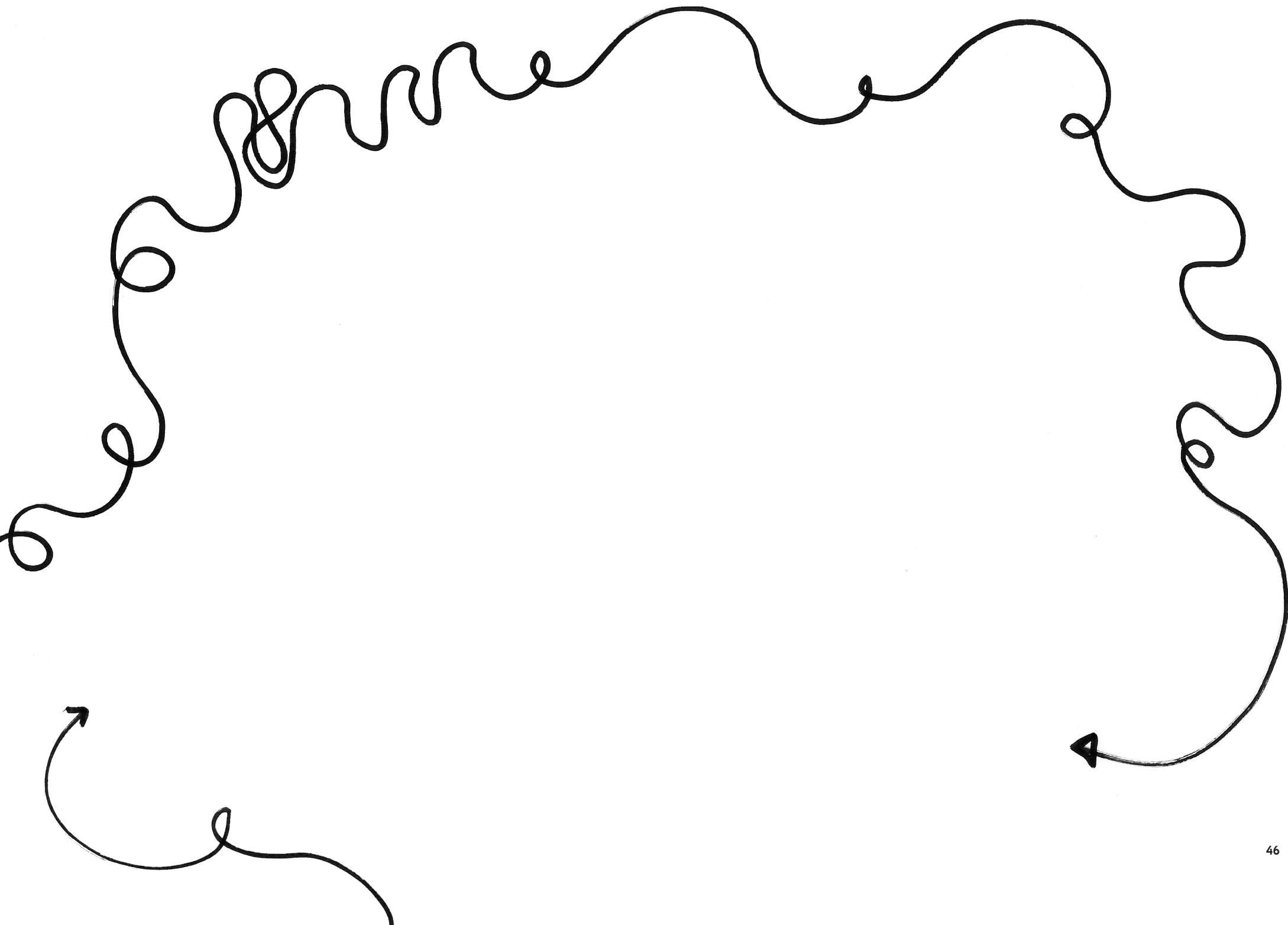
Millicent James, IYP and Word Life Corral performing *Firmament* at The Migrant Festival, 2021.
Photos by Fábio Jorge Calundungo

JAZ MORRISON - FIRMAMENT ①

- INITIALLY JOINING IYP, I WAS INTRODUCED TO THEIR ~~CREATIVE~~ COLLABORATIVE WORK AT THE TIME WITH ARTIST JAZ MORRISON. IYP HAD TO ~~PERFORM~~ CREATE A PERFORMANCE IN RESPONSE TO MORRISON AND HER (MURCH)'S MUSIC. ~~AND~~ I LOVED HOW WELCOMING IYP WAS AND STILL IS. I ENJOYED HOW INTERACTIVE AND ENGAGING THE PREPARATION WAS. WITH ② ALL THE IYP MEMBERS ^{BEING} ~~AT~~ ENTHUSIASTIC, ~~AND~~ LIKE-MINDED INDIVIDUALS. FROM THEN I'VE LOVED ATTENDING EACH SESSION AND BEING ACCEPTED INTO SUCH A CREATIVE COMMUNITY. ♡ ☺

-KRISTAL





John Yeadon



John Yeadon giving a talk to IYP, 2021.

Drawing is an essential part of my practice and I think that the teaching of drawing has been neglected in art schools today. My talk on sketchbooks was intended to enthuse Ikon's young artists with the need to draw.

Sketchbooks are the site of the initial idea, the site of conception, of information collection, preparatory work, as an archive of past ideas and a seamless catalogue of the development of an individual's ideas that can be referenced at any time during the artist's career.

From Turner's sketchbook drawings of Coventry, Pisanello's historic sketchbooks, to my own contemporary use of sketchbooks, we also looked at notebooks, text, collecting words and scrapbooks.

The young artists seemed enthusiastic and serious. I hope my talk has stimulated them to find ways of putting their ideas on paper and keeping copious notes. I look forward to working with them again.



Sketchbook drawing of Sperm Whale in Natural History Museum during John Yeadon's first year at Hornsey College of Art in 1966. IYP exploring John Yeadon's sketchbooks, 2021.



SCHOOL OF JEWELLERY

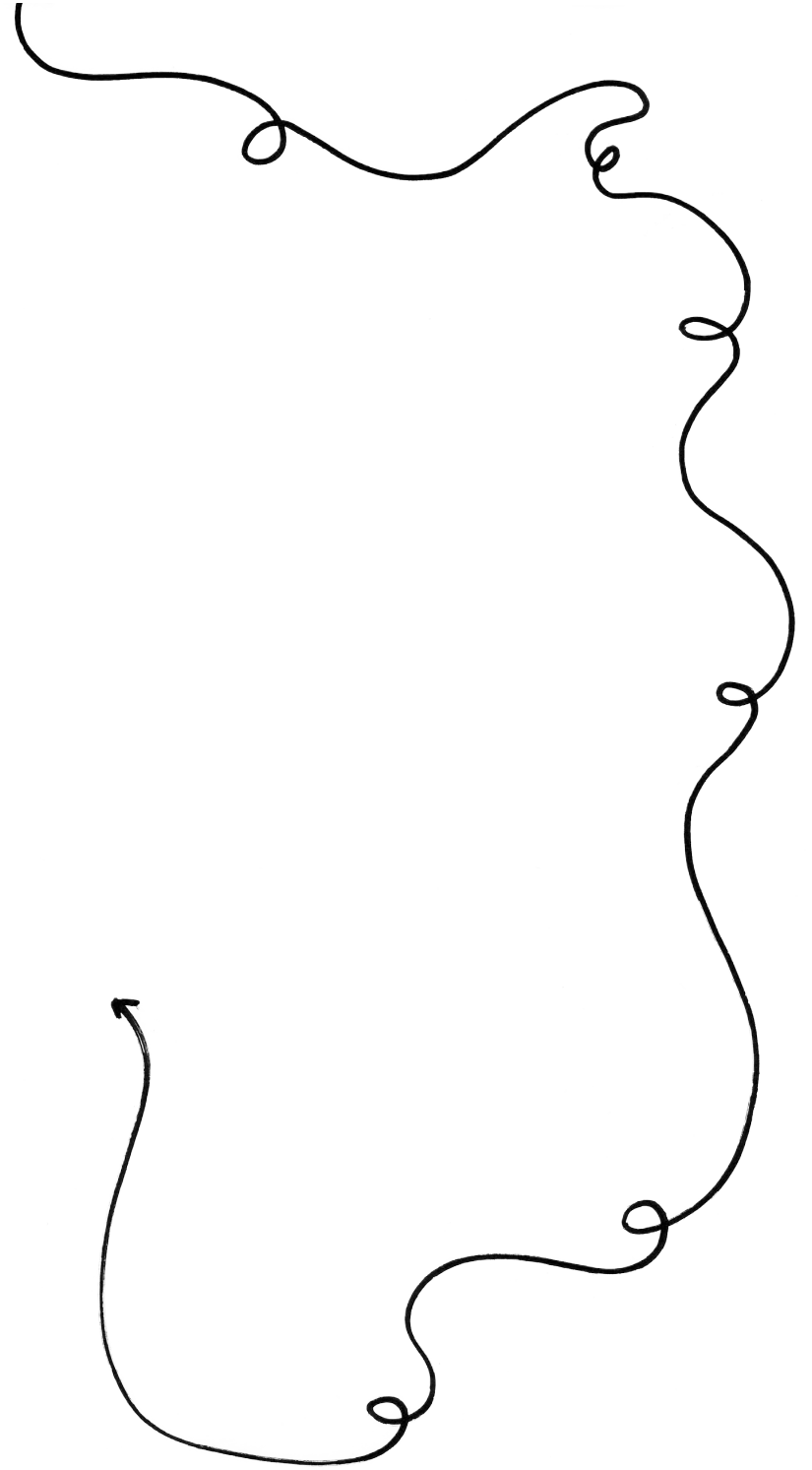
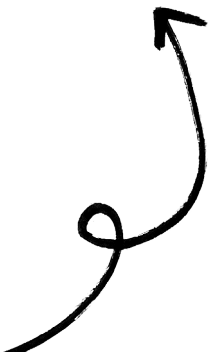
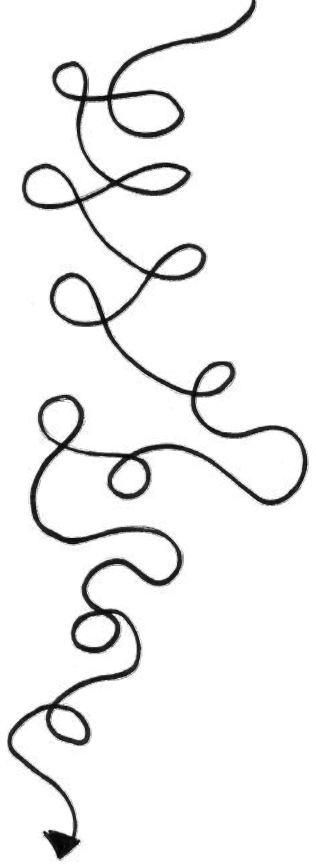


This is a great collaboration between the School of Jewellery, Birmingham City University and IYP.

I am so pleased that we are able to offer the young people a taste of what goes on in the School and, more generally, in the Jewellery Quarter, which is such a core part of Birmingham's heritage.

As a part of this, we focussed on some of the key skills for which Birmingham is famous: casting, enamelling and jewellery fabrication.

I know that the participants were as excited by this as we were to be teaching them.



JENNIE GUY AND MIT JAI INN

In September 2021, IYP were joined by curator Jennie Guy and artist Mit Jai Inn for an exploration of the exhibition *Dreamworld* and the online resource *Artists' Exercises* – a platform for sharing examples of artists' educational practices.

They completed *Notebook Exercise* by artist Ubatsat Sutta, *The Sentence* by Stine Marie Jacobsen, *25 Ways to Make Love to the Earth* by Annie Sprinkle and Elizabeth Stevens, and *Listen 'n Speak* by Kerstin Honeit.

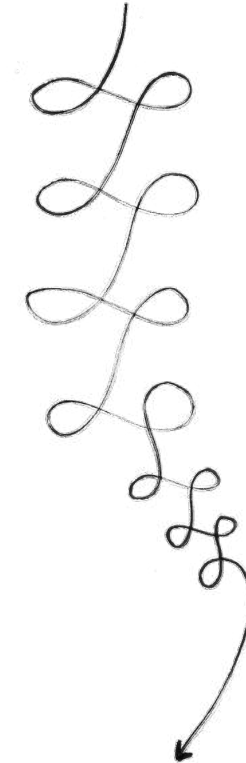
These activities involved working in groups to tell stories, record experiences and create performances.

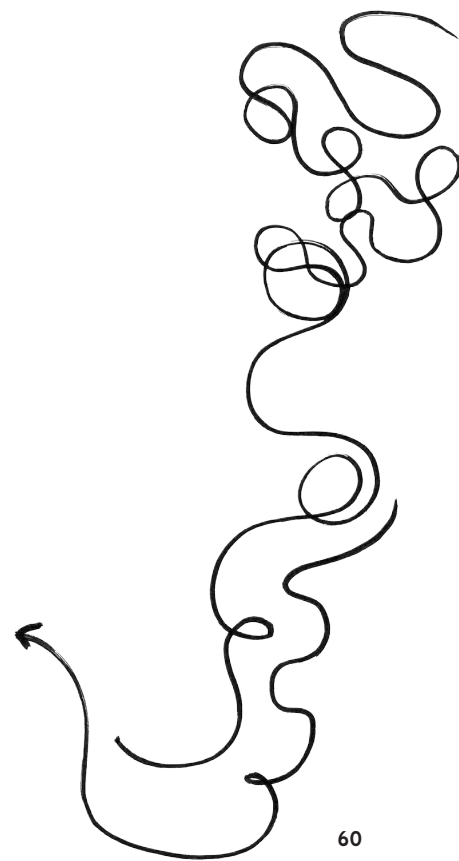
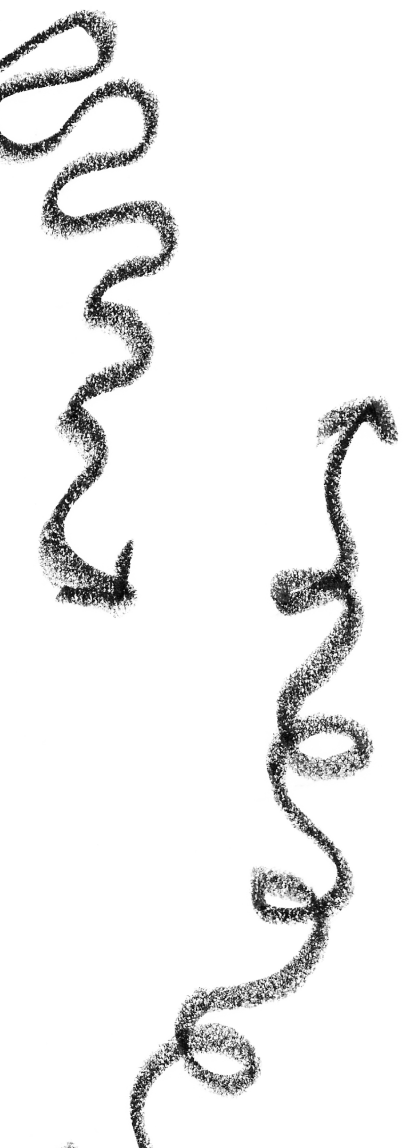


Artists' Exercises as part of Mit-Night School, 2021.



Artists' Exercises as part of Mit-Night School, 2021.





Felicity Allen

Artist Felicity Allen used *Slow Boat* as her studio for the continuation of *Dialogic Portraits*, during Ikon's Migrant Festival, 2021.

Allen portrayed Sasha Ndlovu, a member of Migrant Voice, Birmingham. Born in South Africa, at the age of seven Ndlovu danced at the opening ceremony of the 2010 FIFA World Cup. A public service student with interests in music and dance, Ndlovu aspires to be a gospel singer.

Allen and Ndlovu spent two days together, talking as the portraits were made.

Felicity Allen painting *Dialogic Portraits* at The Migrant Festival, 2021.



Sasha Ndovlu having her portrait painted on *Slow Boat*, The Migrant Festival, 2021.

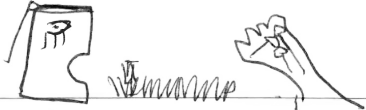


DE' ANNE CROOKS

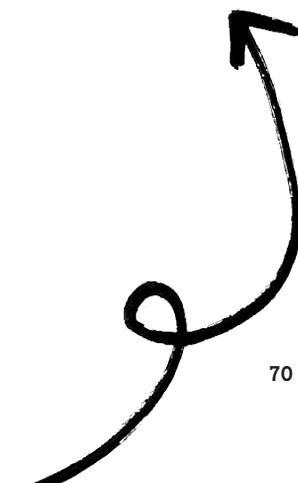
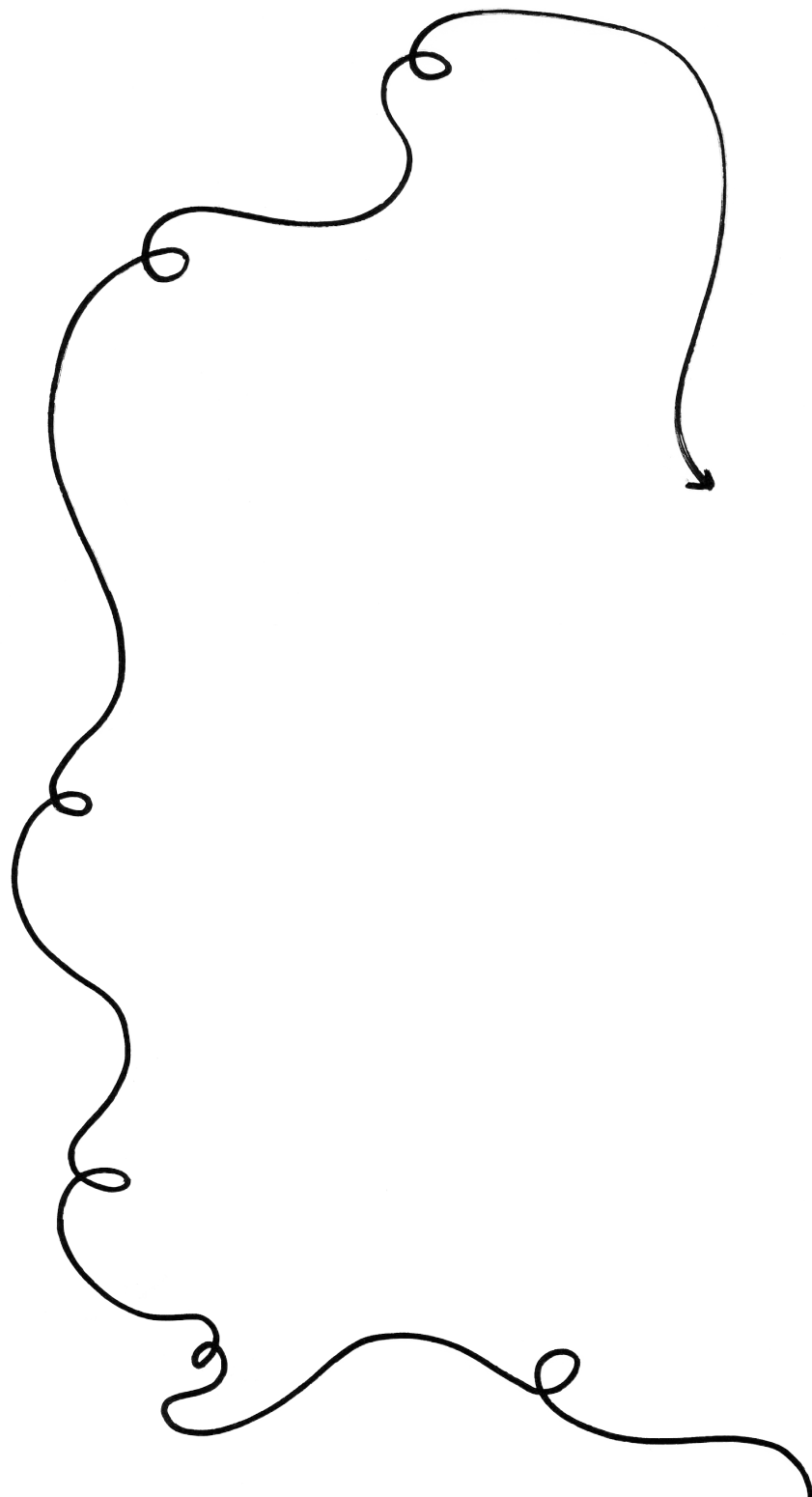


Multidisciplinary artist and educator, De'Anne Crooks met IYP and ARioT from MK Gallery to introduce their practice, lead a short workshop in desktop performance and writing for art.

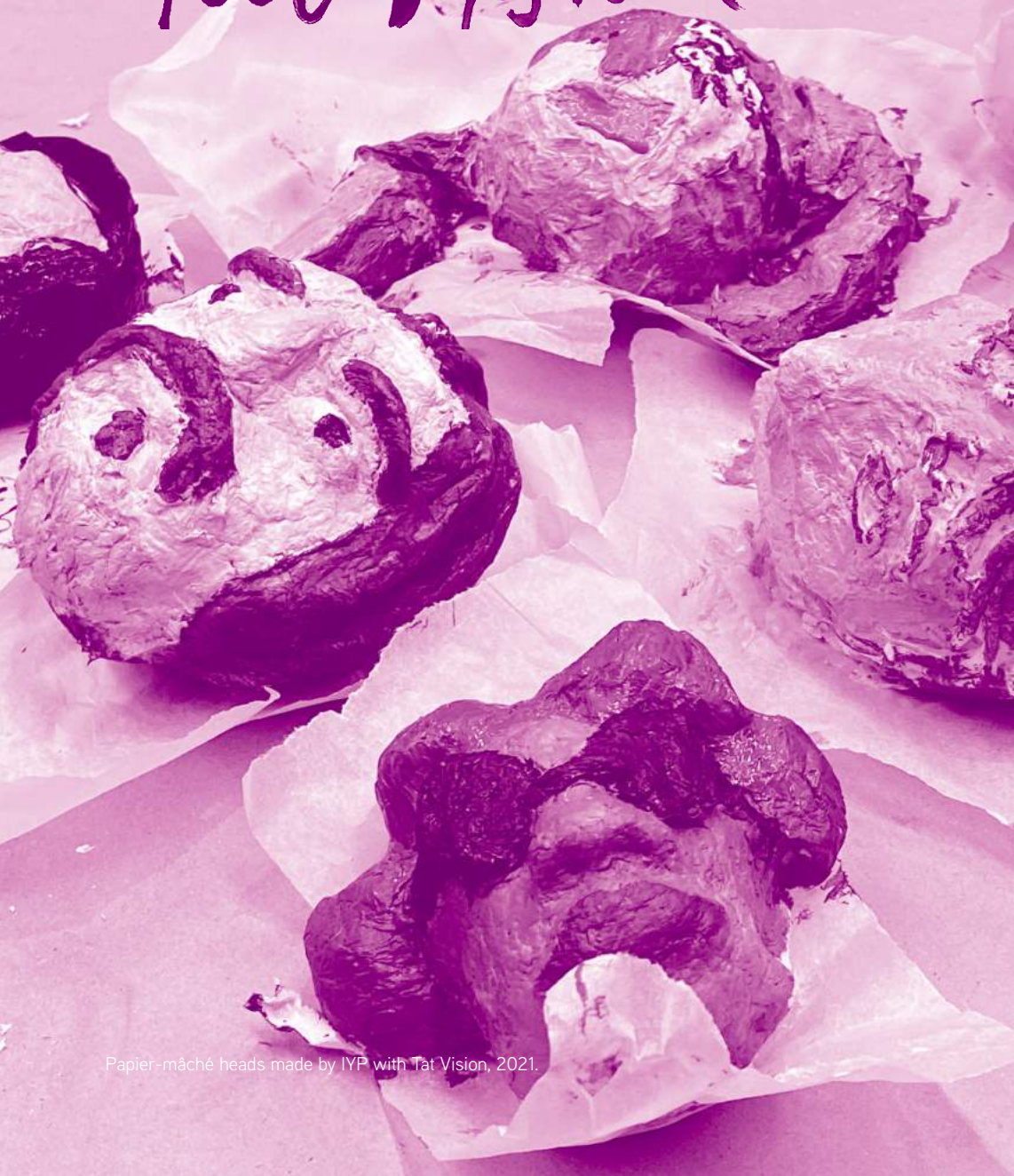
The session created a space to experiment with found images, language and intimacy as tools for creating. Both groups of young people worked together to write text, using images from their phones as stimuli, which were performed or shared in their written form.



holding mushrooms. finding walking. cold
 walking barefoot on the grass. sitting on the
 ground scanning for something but not
 looking for anything specific &
 mushrooms using [mushrooms] finding
 fake or finding [mushrooms] in love
 with the taste of the [mushrooms] walking
 on the grass sitting on the grass
 wearing a jumper means a mushroom
 mushrooms being part of my hands
 feet being part of the ground. green
 nail varnish brown grass, wearing
 mushrooms



TAT VISION *Tat Vision*



Papier-mâché heads made by IYP with Tat Vision, 2021.



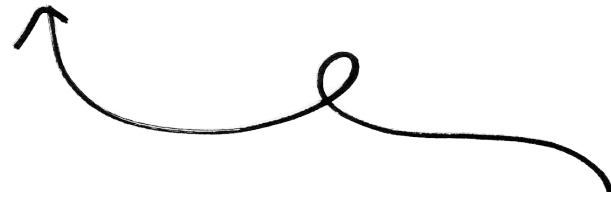
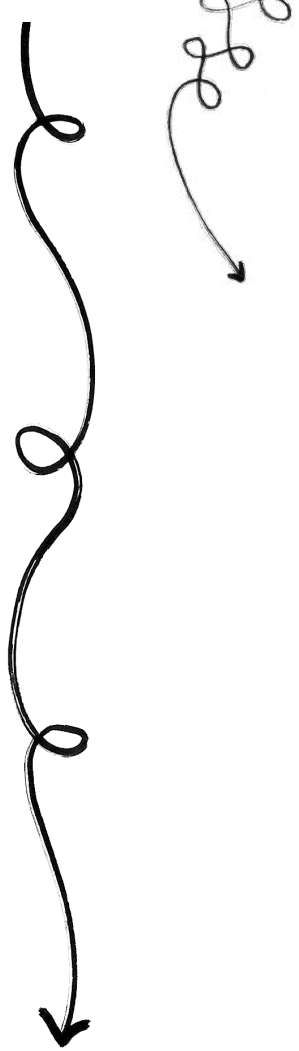
Having titled myself as 'the best papier-mâché artist in all of Birmingham, maybe the Midlands...' I decided it's time to take my skills to IYP. To craft a new generation of mâché artists to continue my legacy. Packed with toilet roll, PVA glue and a mini oven I use to speed up the drying time I was ready to share my skills.

They all showed talent and were good learners. I learnt something too. It's good to stick together in a community, rather than being on your own sticking glue on toilet roll to make odd looking heads.

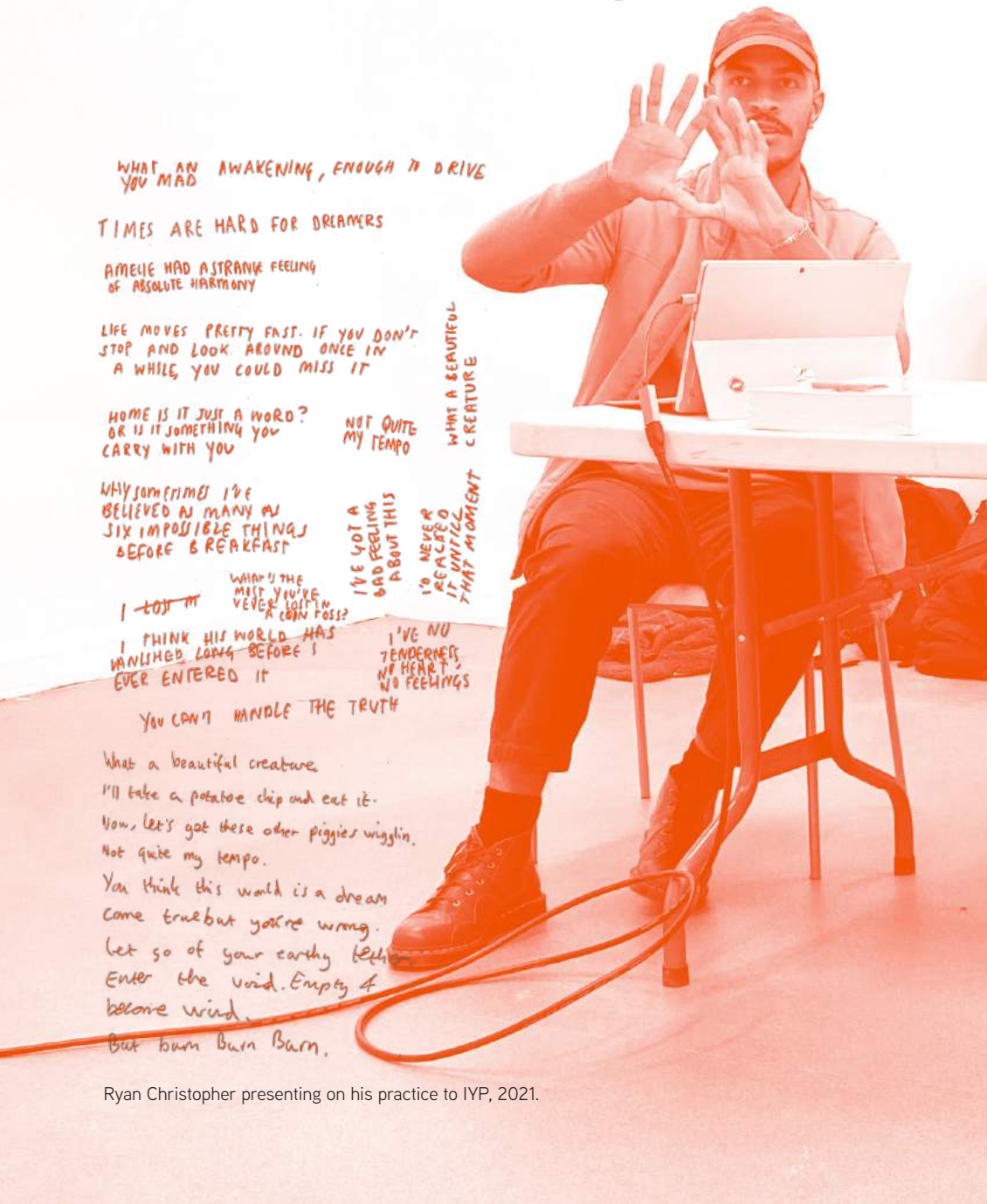
Thanks IYP.



IYP members with their papier-mâché heads, 2021.



R y a n C h r i s t o p h e r



Ryan Christopher presenting on his practice to IYP, 2021.

For the experimental writing and language workshop, everyone was invited to bring 10 or more quotes from films of their choice, which would then be used to construct a new piece of writing made up of quotes brought by themselves and other participants.

I began by introducing the Caribbean concept of creolisation (the process through which creole languages and cultures emerge) as a potential methodology for making art, or in the case of the workshop, for constructing a poem with lines taken from various films, which would then form one 'creolised' piece of writing.

Suzanne Césaire, Édouard Glissant and Patrick Chamoiseau were introduced as theorists of the concept, and writing by Gertrude Stein, Howard Fried and Christian Bök were used as examples of conceptual writing.

It was great getting to know the group and they seemed to have really enjoyed the process of sharing and choosing the film quotes.

At the end of the workshop we shared our writing, and the resulting works were all incredibly moving and poetic, which worked really well with the absurdist, deadpan nature of cutting and pasting separate quotes.



WHAT AN AWAKENING, ENOUGH TO DRIVE
YOU MAD

B E T S Y B R A D L E Y



Betsy Bradley mixing paint at a workshop with IYP, 2022.

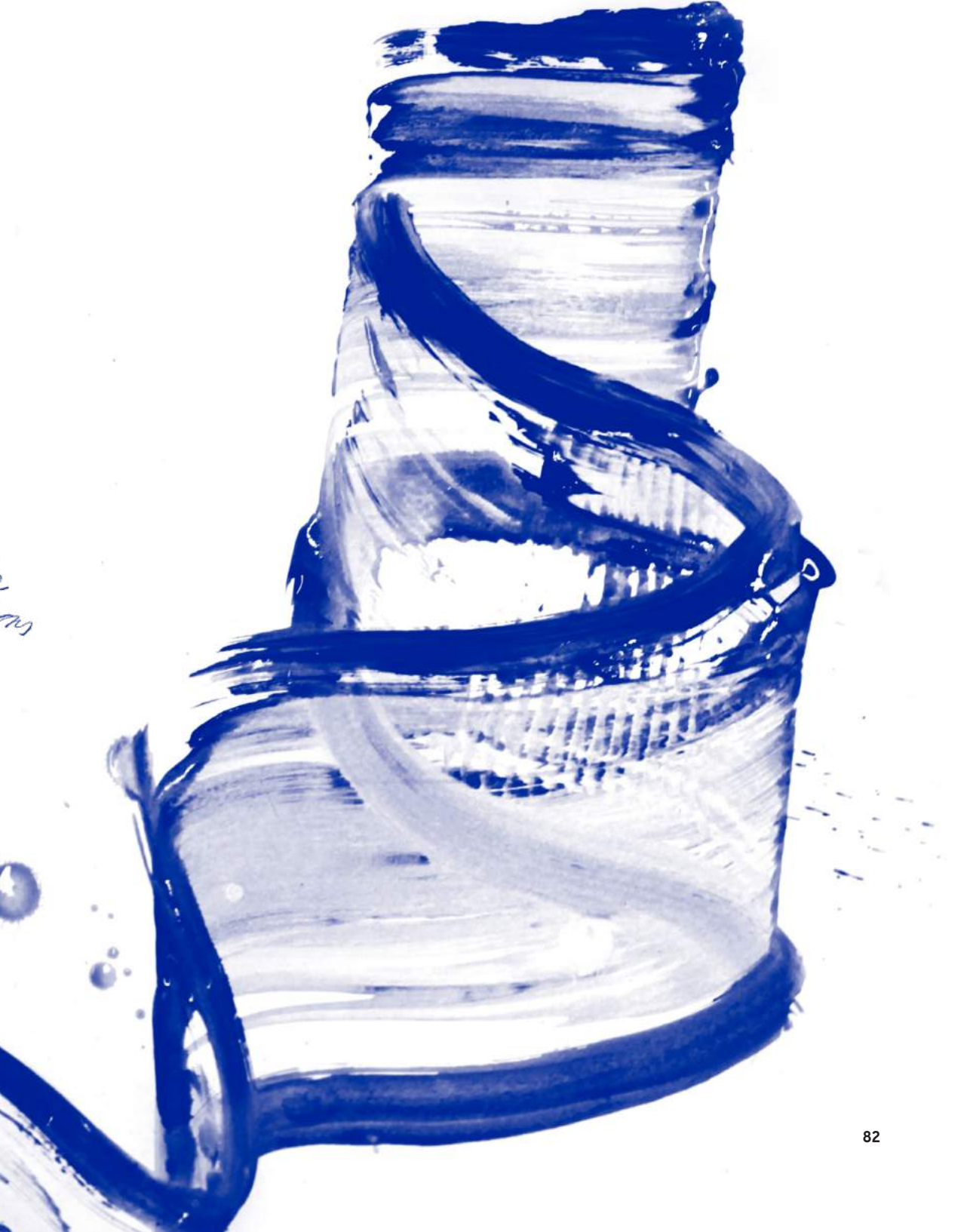
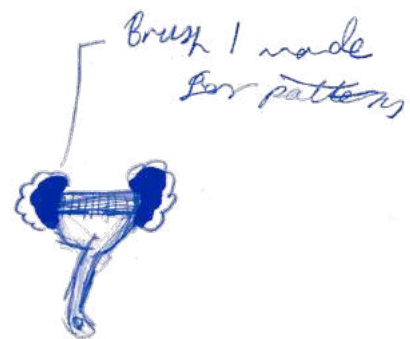
The redesign of Ikon's *Slow Boat* with IYP began with experimental painting workshops.

Together we explored making playful painting tools using found and readymade objects, including old curtain poles, wooden sticks and giant pipe cleaners. Encouraged to fully embrace the unpredictability of these, they made a surprising and collaborative collection of mark-making.

Together, the most exciting elements of their painted gestures were selected, which have been translated by designer Laura Jaunzems into the final design. As a constantly evolving space on a fluid ground, it is hoped that this dynamic new surface will make *Slow Boat* an open and liberating space that encourages discovery.

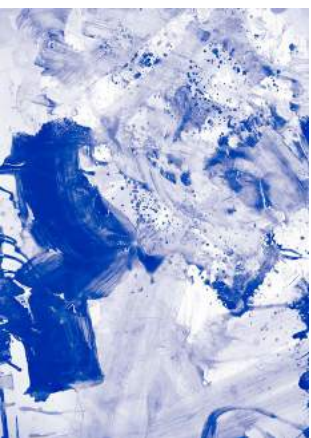
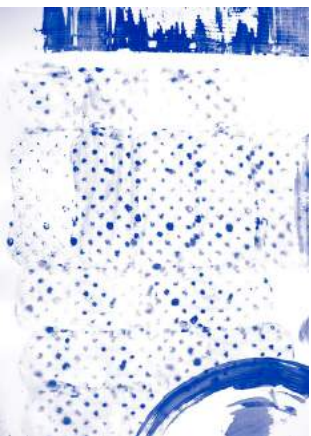
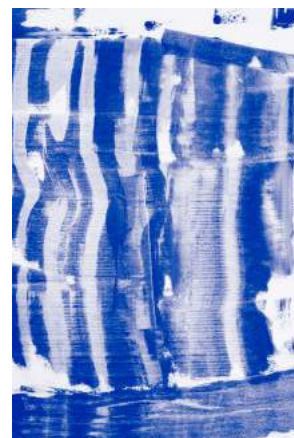
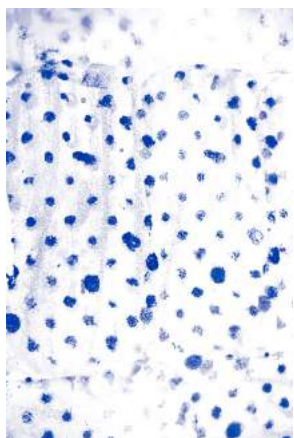
The results are a floating collection of fleeting and joyful gestures and colour. It has been a privilege to work with IYP on this project; I have been truly inspired by their enthusiasm and openness. With this redesign, embodying the power of their creative instinct, I hope it will be a reminder to themselves and others to never stop playing.

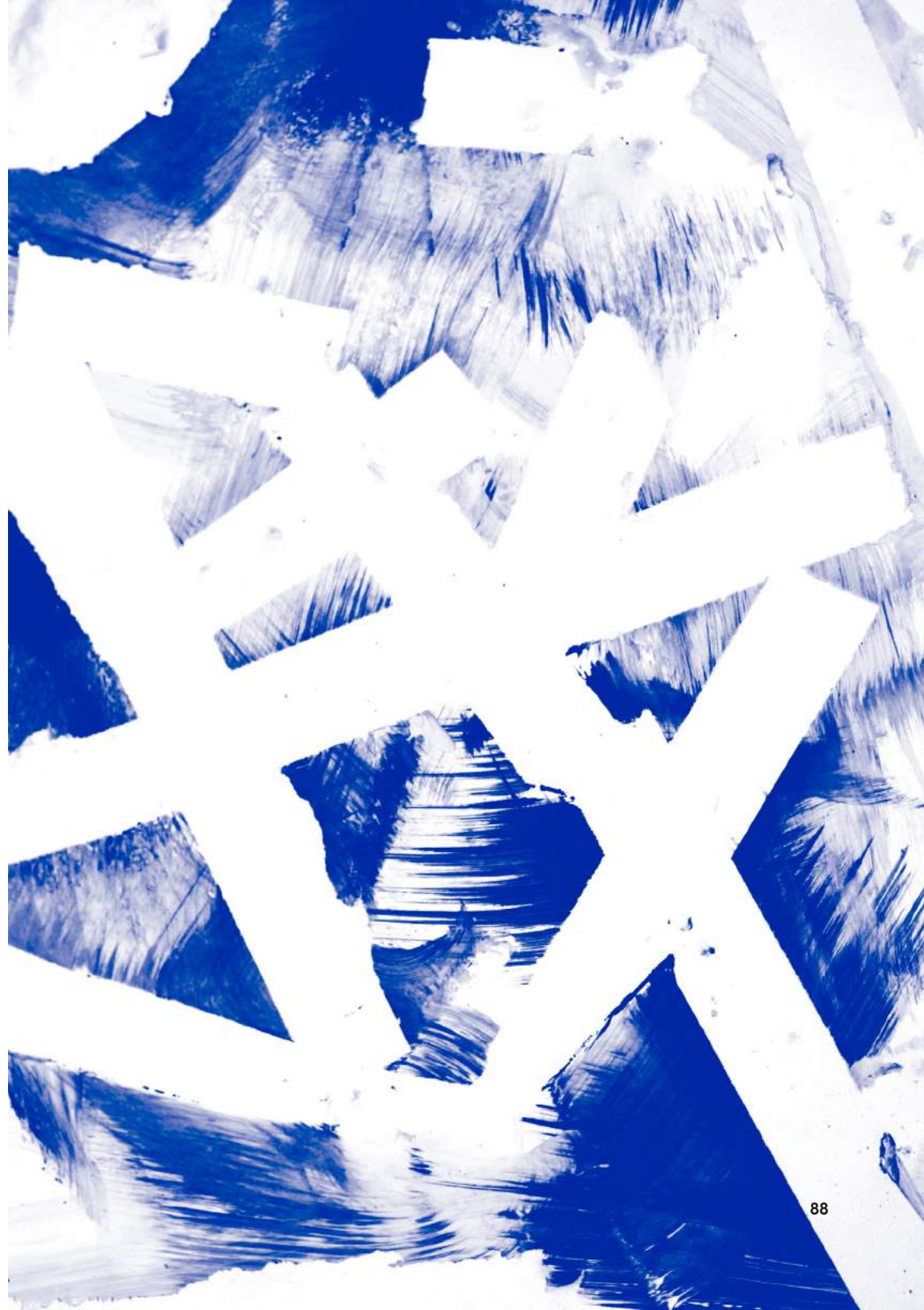
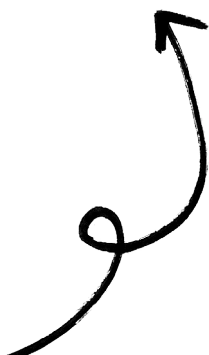






IYP members painting onto a diagram of *Slow Boat*, 2021.







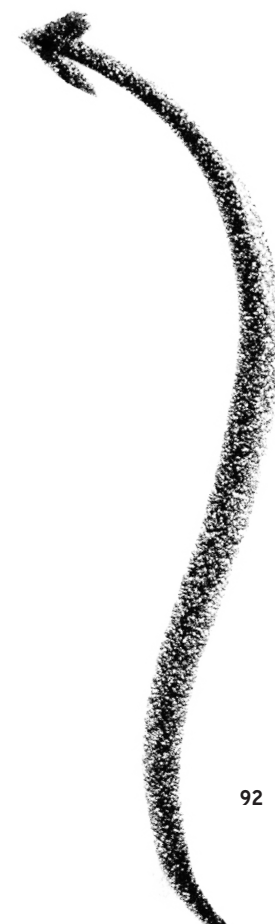
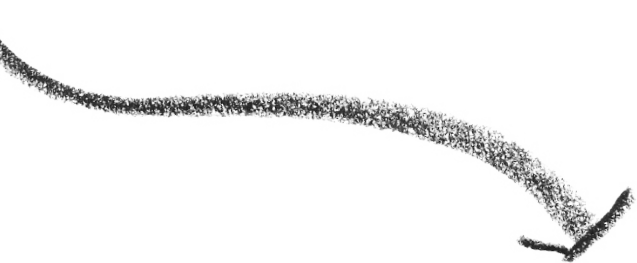
M o n i c a
P e r e z V e g a

I've really enjoyed working with the students at Small Health Leadership Academy to prepare for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games and the idea of 'Common Ground'.

Common and wealth – these two words combine to imply an idealistic notion that we are all equal in status, wealth and access. This is inherently problematic when we reflect on the roots of the word or even compare the contemporary status of each country. Are we actually equal in status, wealth and access?

The modern Commonwealth is referred to as a 'family of nations,' and this is what I wanted to instill in the students; that each country has its own identity and brings its own strengths, skills and experiences to help work towards a common goal. This is how we create common ground and it reiterates the value of collaboration.

The students worked on a series of prints and a collaborative sculpture inspired by Hew Locke's, *Souvenir 9* (2019), part of the Birmingham Museums Collection.



First year review



Back in September 2014, a FE student on a Level 3 National Diploma Course in Art and Design course handed me a Post-it note on which they'd written what they wanted to get out of the year ahead. I'm going to quote it verbatim, as I keep it as a reminder as to what happens when you create a place where art can live.

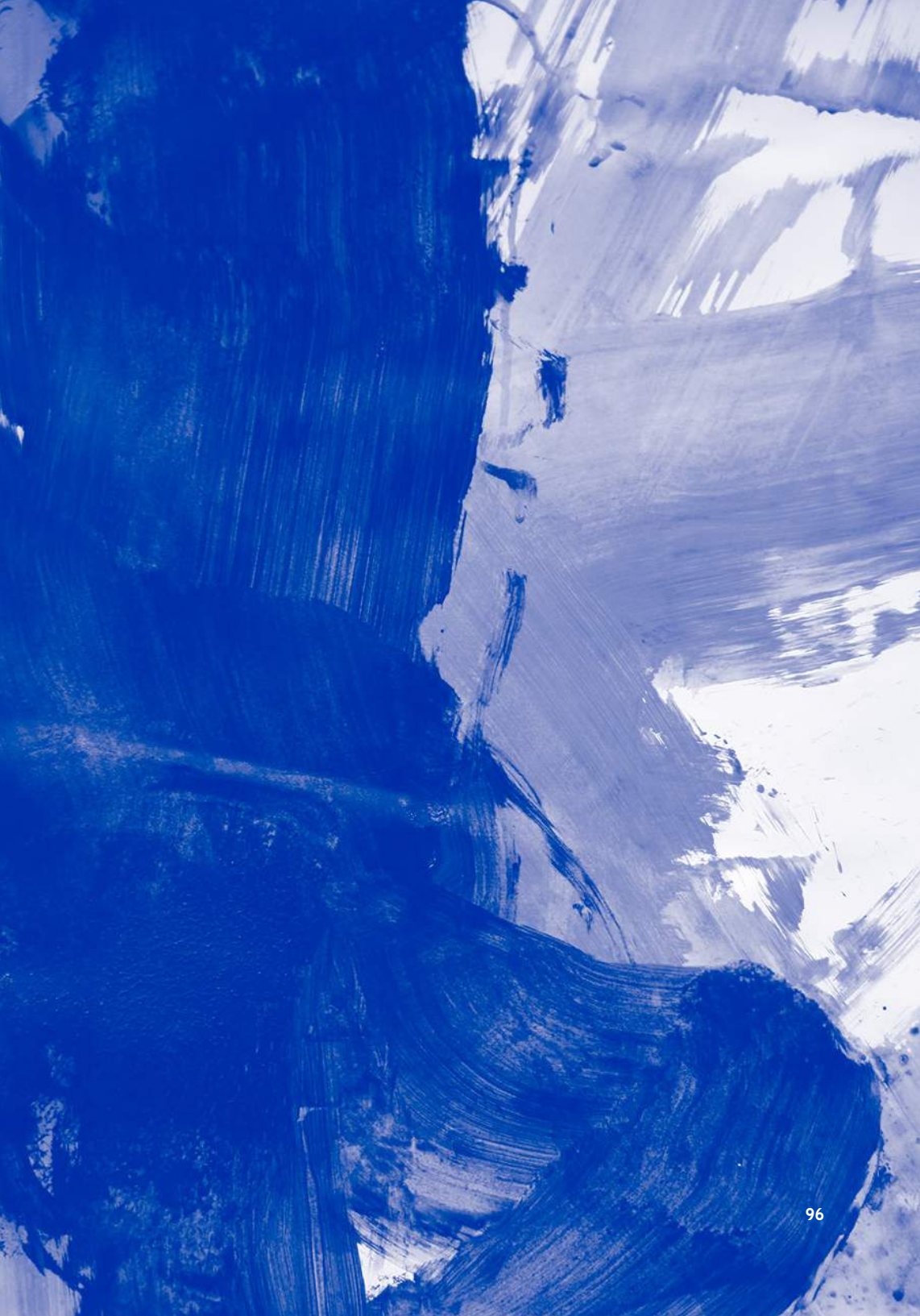
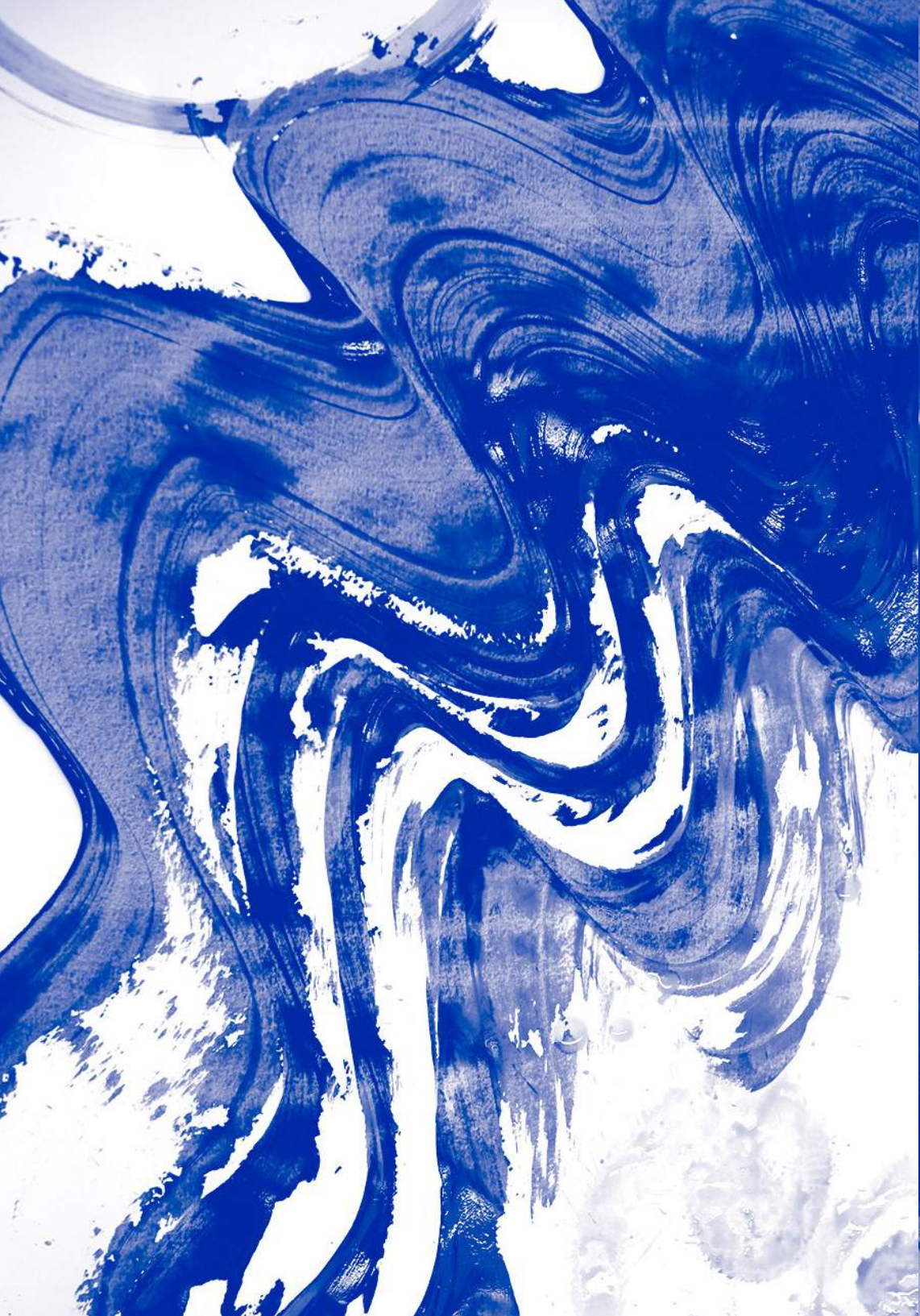
I expect doors to open and knowledge and ideas to explode through, to walk into different worlds.

The work of IYP provides such a space and proves that this access matters. Participants' experiences of walking through the doors of Ikon Gallery, travelling on the canal system with *Slow Boat* and exploring the regional spaces within which art lives is transformational. This mutual journey creates meaningful situations for imagination to manifest itself and knowledge to deepen. The challenge here is to explore the potential of limitless creativity together. To welcome aspects of making and thinking together that are so shut down and shut off in daily life. To learn that once a door has been opened, you maintain that space so that others can join and pick up the activities in which you are engaged.

Cathy Wade, Artist and Academic



IYP's first annual review, chaired by Cathy Wade, in Britta Marakatt Labba's Ikon exhibition *Under the Vast Sky*. Photos by Tod Jones.



IYP is an active and supportive community filled with collaboration, making, discussion and a love for art. Each week was another creative experience, a constant process of connecting, learning and playing. It's really helped shape my understanding of what a supportive art community can be and I am so grateful to have been a part of it.

Painting with Betsy
 very messy!!!
 Paint on MASKS
 me
 glasses
 Plate made at modern clay
 Brush I made for patterns
 Clay coils stuck together with slip
 squeeze!
 slow boat



Stuvia



IYP 2021/22

Edited by IYP, Rosie Abbey and Linzi Stauvers
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For 12 years, Sandwell Council have leased Ikon the 72 feet narrow boat (The Aaron Manby) for IYP to explore the local canal network and docks for arts events and performances.

   ikongallery  ikonyouthprogramme

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