

IKON/60

Ikon Gallery
1 Oozells Square Brindleyplace
Birmingham B1 2HS
0121 248 0708 / ikon-gallery.org
free entry / donations welcome
Registered charity no. 528892

IKON YOUTH PROGRAMME 2024-2027



IYP and artist Dylan Fox on *Slow Boat* (2024). Image courtesy Ikon.

Ikon is pleased to announce the forward programme for *Slow Boat* 2024-2027. With renewed funding from Freelands Foundation for three years, Ikon Youth Programme (IYP) continues to activate a converted narrowboat as an alternative art school.

The group of young people, aged 16-21, has developed a regional route which explores the rich art school heritage of Birmingham and the West Midlands. Each year, *Slow Boat* travels 150 miles of canal network, with annual stop offs in Walsall, Wolverhampton, Tipton, Stourbridge, Smethwick and Coventry.

Slow Boat was created in response to Ikon Youth Programme's request for 'a space of their own' through which they could produce and present their version of contemporary art as it intersects with popular culture and political activism. Since 2011, IYP has partnered with artists and community members around the acquisition of arts and crafts knowledge and skill. Against a backdrop of growing social media usage, IYP has collaborated with other youth groups to channel their voices, alleviate anxieties and raise awareness of justice issues.

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Slow Boat is used by Ikon Youth Programme as a studio to develop and showcase new work in ceramics, glass, performance, printmaking, photography, sound art and textiles. It is a space where young people can be themselves, experimenting with the idea of an artistic identity, individually and as a collective. In its next phase, IYP has an environmental focus, combating the climate crisis and harnessing the power of young people to lead on climate action.

"I was very glad to hear the funding for Ikon Youth Programme has been renewed. It has provided a relaxed and creative space for me away from my academic studies, where I have met lots of people with similar yet varied interests. There being no financial barrier has allowed me to take part to the fullest extent, leading to many unique and invaluable experiences. These experiences have supported my decision to study a creative subject at university. I hope this funding means many more people can access and gain similar experiences from IYP!" Alice, IYP member

As part of the programme, IYP present a roving series of workshops, cultural interventions and exhibitions, working with regional festivals and art events. IYP hosts other youth initiatives, partnering with organisations such as Sandwell Youth Service. The group connect with Further Education, including Walsall College, Glasshouse College and Halesowen College, while continuing to offer creative space for students in Higher Education, via art schools in Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Coventry.

In designing an alternative art school curriculum, IYP has engaged a global network of associate artists and educators, including: [Taiba Akhtar](#), [Dauvit Alexander](#), [Felicity Allen](#), [Haseebah Ali](#), [Betsy Bradley](#), [Hira Butt](#), [Polly Brant](#), [Robert Cervera](#), [Ryan Christopher](#), [Exodus Crooks](#), [Rose Davey](#), [Angelina May Davis](#), [Thomas Eke](#), [Jennie Guy](#), [Sarah Hamilton Baker](#), [Mit Jai Inn](#), [Ayesha Jones](#), [Laura Jaunzems](#), [Seungwon Jung](#), [James Kennedy](#), [Fae Kilburn](#), [Mengxia Liu](#), [Ross McCormick](#), [Modern Clay](#), [Jaz Morrison](#), [Farwa Moledina](#), [Ashokkumar D Mistry](#), [Leanne O'Connor](#), [Laura Onions](#), [Monica Perez-Vega](#), [Yhonnice Scarce](#), [Emily Scarrott](#), [Larissa Shaw](#), [Morgan Stockton](#), [Melati Suryodarmo](#), [Alice Theobald](#), [Black Country Type](#), [Tat Vision](#), [Cathy Wade](#), [John Yeadon](#) and [Rafal Zar](#).

During 2024 – 2027, the group embarks on new projects with: [Alex Billingham](#), [Sarah Byrne](#), [Dylan Fox](#), [Joanna Fursman](#), [Jo Gane](#), [Lucy Grubb](#), [Annie Higgins](#), [Mahtab Hussain](#), [Fabien Verschaere](#), [We Are Makers](#) and [Courtenay Welcome](#). With support from Rosie Abbey, Ikon Youth Programme Coordinator, and Dharmendra Parmar, *Slow Boat* Coordinator, IYP produce an annual publication and review event, in collaboration with *Slow Boat's* evaluator Cathy Wade.

"Ikon Youth Programme's creation and exploration of 'a space of their own' where they could produce, present and promote their work reflects the symbiotic relationships we encourage in making and exploring. Slow Boat fosters process-driven art practice and re-imagines the location of an art school. We're excited to continue supporting Ikon's young participants with the space they need to consider, question and evolve their engagement within visual art practice."
Dr Henry Ward, Director, Freelands Foundation.

For more information, high-res images and to request interviews please contact Rebecca Small by email r.small@ikon-gallery.org or call Ikon on 0121 248 0708.

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Social Media Handles - @ikongallery #IkonGallery @freelandsfoundation @FreelandsF
@ace_national @aceagrams @ace_midlands @bhamcitycouncil

Notes to Editors:

1. For more information about **Ikon Youth Programme** and **Slow Boat** visit ikon-gallery.org/education/ikon-youth-programme
2. **Ikon** is an internationally acclaimed contemporary art gallery, situated in Birmingham's city centre. Established in 1964 by a group of artists, Ikon celebrates its 60th anniversary in 2024. It is an educational charity with free entry for all, and works to encourage public engagement with contemporary art through exhibiting new work in a context of debate and participation. The gallery programme features artists from around the world and a variety of media is represented, including sound, film, mixed media, photography, painting, sculpture and installation. Ikon's off-site programme develops dynamic relationships between art, artists and audiences outside the gallery. Projects vary enormously in scale, duration and location, challenging expectations of where art can be seen and by whom. Education is at the heart of Ikon's activities, stimulating public interest in and understanding of contemporary visual art. Ikon aims to build dynamic relationships with audiences, enabling visitors to engage with, discuss and reflect on contemporary art. ikon-gallery.org
3. **Ikon** is open Wednesday – Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays, 11am-5pm. Free entry, donations welcome. Ikon is supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England, and Birmingham City Council.
4. **Freelands Foundation** believes art is central to a broad and balanced education, and a right for everyone. They are driven by a conviction in the vital role of learning and making to foster creativity, resilience, criticality and problem-solving that empowers and equips us for the future. As the Foundation approach their tenth anniversary, they resolve to strengthen their work with teachers, students, schools, universities, artists and cultural organisations. freelandsfoundation.co.uk
5. **Arts Council England** is the national development agency for creativity and culture. ACE have set out their strategic vision in *Let's Create* that by 2030 they want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences. From 2023 to 2026 ACE will invest over £467 million of public money from Government and an estimated £250 million from The National Lottery each year to help support the sector and to deliver this vision.
6. **Birmingham City Council** is the local government body responsible for the governance of the City of Birmingham, UK. It is the most populated local council area in the United Kingdom (excluding counties) with 101 elected councillors representing over one million people, in 69 wards. The council headquarters are at the Council House, Victoria Square in the heart of the city centre. The council is responsible for running nearly all local services, with the exception of those run by joint boards. For more information visit www.birmingham.gov.uk



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