DO WE REALLY NEED MORE

CREATIVE COMMUNITIES?

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BA DESIGN

CONTEXTUAL REPORT

STRACT

This paper examines the wide benefits of creative communities in the UK and how we can best form and nurture them. It adds to the ongoing conversation on the changing of community life throughout the UK and how it could be helped through examples from the thriving communities within emerging and established creative industries.

In the UK it feels as if there is a monopoly on creativity in London, If you are from elsewhere here there is a certain drive to 'need' to live in London, why is that? In most towns, creative pursuits are less respected and there is a concerning lack of any culture of creativity that coincides with that. I will investigate how communities with a culture of creativity can help find solutions to many problems we face and how forming communities of creative businesses can drive economic and social change. In doing this I will look at the research of social scientists Richard Florida and Robert Putnam and the problems in the materialisation of their theories; interview people who exist within or work with creative communities and visit relevant sites, as well as analyse my own experiences of navigating creative communities within London. I will also use data and reports from NESTA and Nick Clifton to analyse the state of creative clusters the creative economy in the UK. My findings are culminated in a proposal for a new creative space and cultural programme based in East London as part of the 1 Love community project.

INTRODUC

London is often perceived as the creative centre of Britain, here the creative economy accounts for 16.3 per cent of total jobs in the capital (7.4 in the rest of the UK) (Tongi, 2015). In any kind of creative pursuit you can find the resources and people for it here. London's creative scene is saturated and buzzing. Taking full advantage of the unparalleled connectivity technology grants us today, we are now able to easily form and manage vast networks across cities and borders. In London people are actively ready to create and collaborate in a very positively spirited way. I found this out pretty much as soon as I got here. Sucked into a vast web of talented individuals, hungry to add to the culture and make their mark. The underground music scene is flourishing in the wave of new music sharing platforms, ushering in a breeding ground for creatives of all kinds. Creative communities form, and with them a culture of making, sharing and collaborating. Funding is available, though there could be more, and institutions such as museums and galleries are plentiful. Areas of the city are extremely fertile ground. You only need to throw a seed for it to grow. Just wandering around Shoreditch with a camera gave me my first photography job and sequentially the beginnings of many more opportunities. Today I know where to turn for the people and resources I need, I'm constantly working with people I have met before. Over time collaborating with people makes networks build and build until a vast encompassing community is formed. This web is aided by tools such as social networks and technology.

It wasn't like this in Wigan. Wigan is a town in the North West, half way between Liverpool and Manchester. It used to be a key industrial centre, with major textile mills and coal mines. Coal had been mined in Wigan for over 500 years (Frangopulo, N. J. 1977). The Leeds to Liverpool canal passes through Wigan, and it was one of the first towns to receive a railway in the 1830s - connecting it to an easily assessable trade network. But things change. Over time the industries died out like they did all over Britain. Coal now only accounts for 8.6% of our energy source, down from 67% in 1990 (Gov.uk, 2017). Imagine what a shift like that does for town like Wigan. It takes it's life force away. What you're left with is a strange mix of delightful northern charm, drug and alcohol fuelled lad culture, and a distinct lack of ambition. There's not much hope in towns like Wigan. When the industries left, it took the root of the region's culture with it. Here, creatives don't seem to fit in. Towns across the UK seem to suffer from a serious lack of creative culture and in-turn creative communities, as well as a lack of respect for the art & design fields and their importance in the UK Economy.

Creativity in these places is mainly kept in schools and colleges, people do not tend to create and collaborate together outside of education and there is a definite stigma attached to following a creative path. Echoes of "How you gonna get a job though?" run amok. And they'd be right in a town like Wigan. There aren't many roles for artists or designers there, you would have to move to another city. You could stay relatively close and go to Manchester, but even here you would not find a creative scene with all its support and resources like you do in London.

Using my Instagram story I asked people who were brought up in towns what the creative scene was like growing up.

Replied to your story

COMPLETELY non existent. My creative space was online and at the time that was tumblr lol. But the more creative I got the weirder people thought I was and it kinda alienated me from my town and pushed me towards London

Write a message...
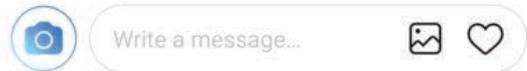
Replied to your story

Only exists at school within the art department or tech department imo. For us being about an hour/ hour and a half away from London we usually just go to the big city and discover the art instead or sometimes go to nearby bigger towns like Tunbridge Wells that have a bigger community of artists or travel to further artist towns like Hastings

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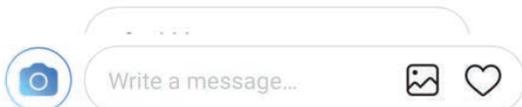
Never realised the true potential of creativity til i moved to liverpool to study a degree, its like an alternate universe and whenever i go back its like going in a time warp.
Overall v detached from the creative world, and blind to its existence. An entire community functioning without creativity, tis v strange & bleak

Write a message...
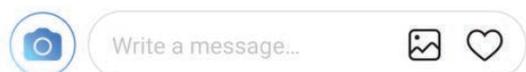
Creativity is made to seem like it is something for the few or at least a somewhat useful trait, not the deeply rooted advantage we have as a species (Lalanvd, 2017). There are great benefits to be had in every day life from being actively creative in some form. Imagine a place where culture is ripe and the neighbourhood gets together to take part in cultural activities, and in doing so sharing ideas and developing new ones, bridging trust between people and purpose for those who need it. Things are shared between each other and people help each other by sharing skills, resources and knowledge. There is a reason this almost utopian sounding idea sounds so appealing. It fulfils the innate needs to exist in community, it protrudes safety, growth and a fulfilment of needs. This is what creative communities try to achieve.
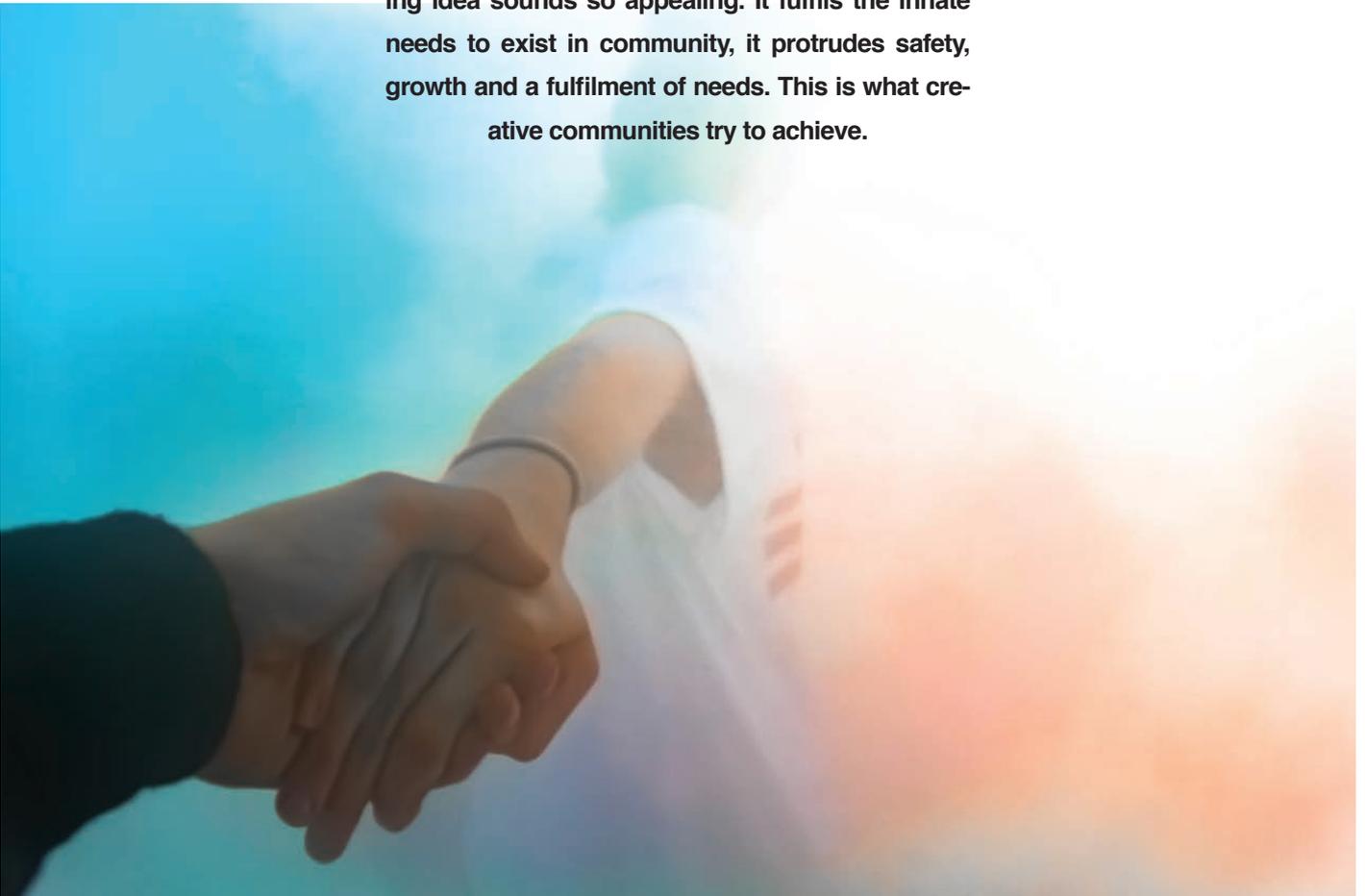
CONTEXT

EVERYDAY CRE

Jennifer Williams founded the Centre for Creative Communities in 1977, her book *Common Threads, Uncommon People* (Williams, 2005) investigates the benefits of creative communities to society and the discovery of common traits among the people who catalyse the interaction of people of varied skillsets in communities. She comments on how many places have little culture of creativity and collaboration, as well as dwindling community interaction.

Williams' book speaks of people and communities who use their mind and body for the benefit of the community they are a part of. Not necessarily sticking to their profession's but instead "Following instincts and passions more than learned skills" (p.10). In doing so, great work in community problem solving can be achieved. Community can grant reassurance of a positive future — If you are surrounded by like-minded people you are more assured that they might want the same things as you, your agendas are aligned or compatible which means they have a better chance of becoming reality.

> 'Fourteen projects in ten European countries collaborated... They agreed that all communities have within them a spirit of optimism and enthusiasm. This spirit can be a powerful force of change'
> (Williams, 2005, p.10)

Being part of a community brings benefits beyond just the physical, but also to the mind state of the people. As I found during Capsule 2051 (see Appendix A), a lack of community feel can result in a lack of hope in people, bringing with it inability to perceive a positive future. Shaping the future of communities cannot just be left to councils, governments and businesses. With no ear on the ground they struggle to keep up with the rapid changes and without community consultation they run the risk of disregarding or misjudging the needs of the community.

In the book *New Creative Community: The Art of Cultural Development*, Arlene Goldbard (Goldbard, 2010) defines the growing field of cultural community development. A creative community can mean different things to different people, but one definition is a community that utilises creativity and collaboration to help each other and make things better in their neighbourhoods. They may utilise similar properties as those found in the creative industries such as collaboration and the sharing of ideas. When a person is acting out of interest and not necessity they are able to bring a lot more to the table

CREATIVITY

"People can bring all they are and all they value to the work: their minds and bodies, their histories and relationships, their deepest meanings and beliefs." (Goldbard, 2010, p.14)

Here we see how by introducing people to an environment of sharing and free expression, properties found with creative communities, they can begin to bring those ideas to reality and start the process of change. *New Creative Community* pushes the notion that there are emerging actions that come about through the active participation in culture within community.
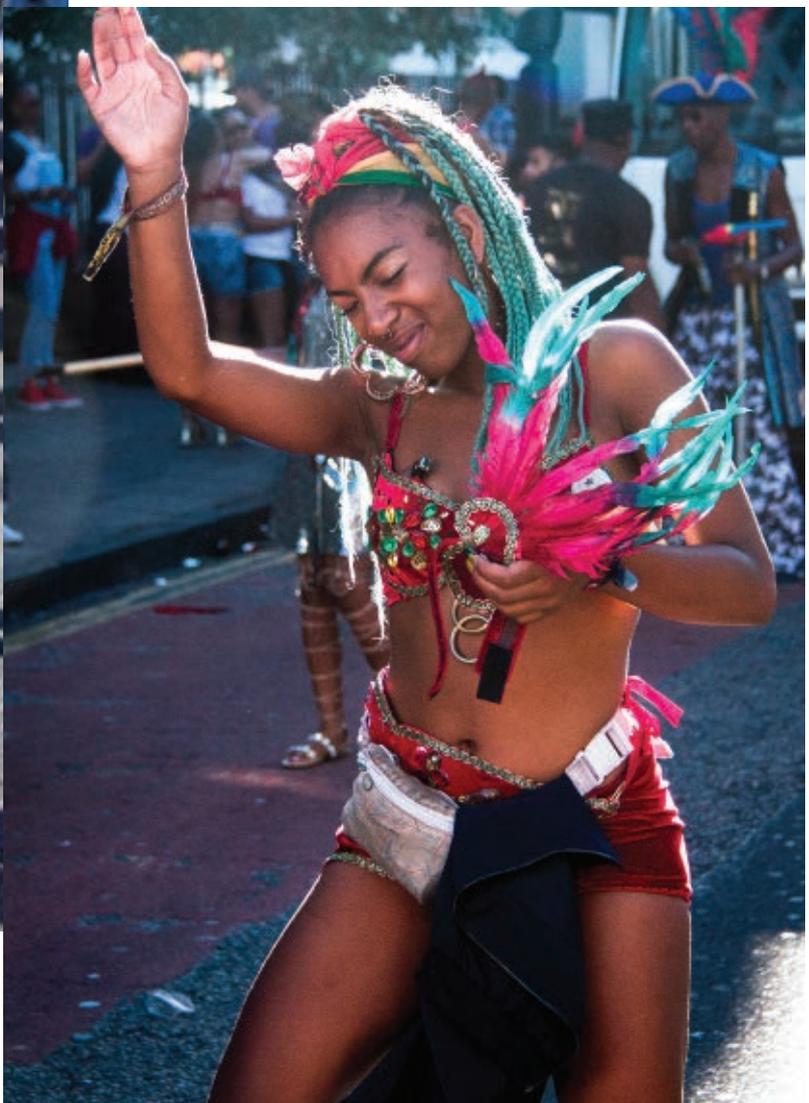
Engaging in cultural activities allows diverse communities to dynamically mix experience and ideas that allow new scope to our own personal position and consider new possibilities. (Stern, 2002).
Jack Weatherford calls this 'dynamic tension', he describes it as the force that 'fosters innovation' in societies across the globe for the past ten thousand years.

> "Aesthetic curiosity is stimulated in places where cultures 'collide', through trade, war, exploration, or accident." (Weatherford, 2013)

So if the act of simply introducing cultural activity to community could not only hold the community together but also provide a host of societal benefits, why don't people in power push for it? Although a simple idea, it is not easy to achieve and even less so when the size of the community is increased. One of the problems is that community builders do not often work together and coordinate their strategies.

> "This absence of integrated strategies tends to perpetuate or even expand the social and economic inequities that plague our cities and towns". (Stern, 2002).

Examples of successful community building and creative communities can be found easily but problems are not so widely talked about. Many community organisations find great success initially but struggle to make themselves sustainable, there is never a perfect strategy.

DYNAM

MIC TENSION
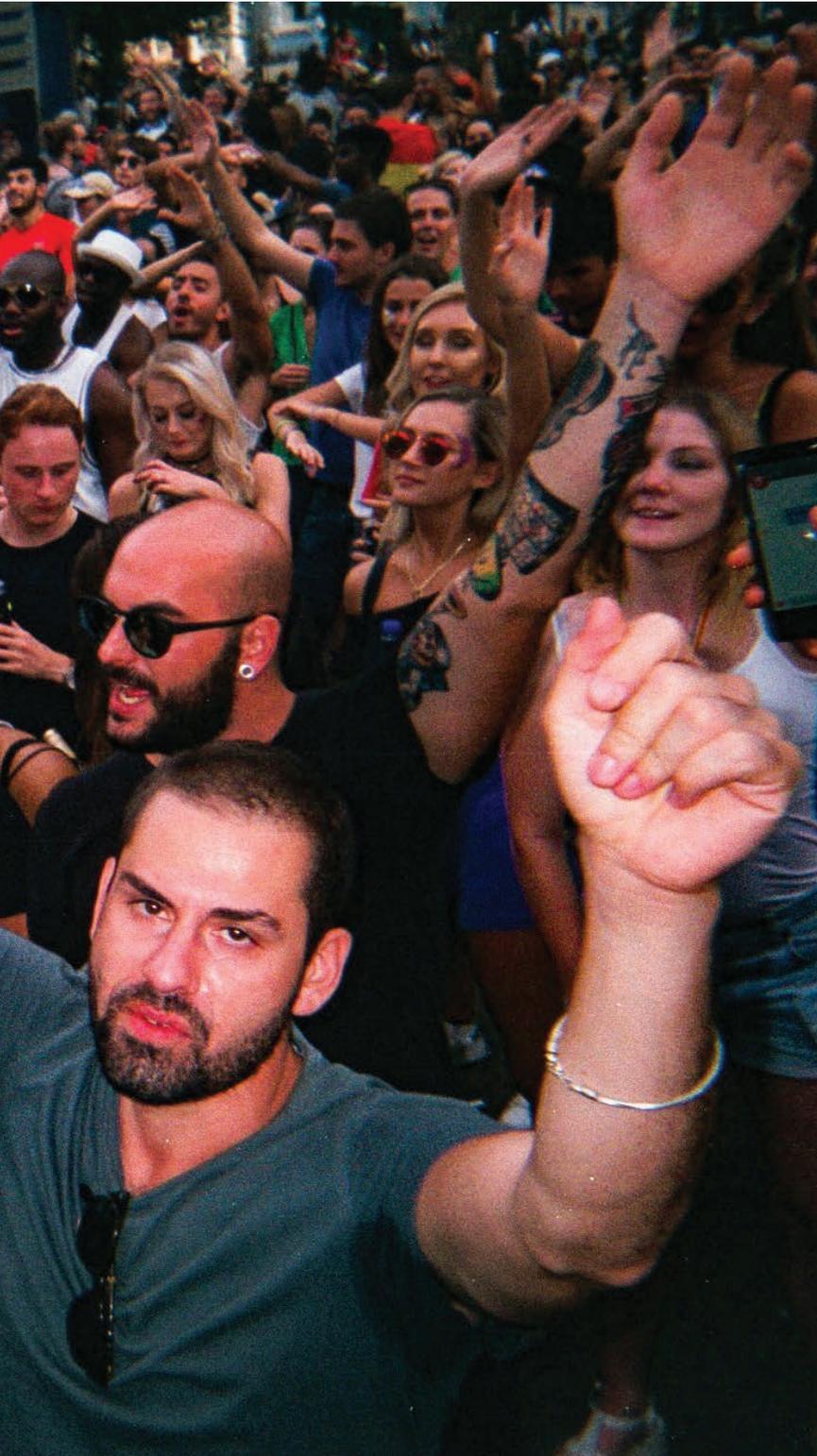
Richard Florida and Robert Putnam, both American political scientists, released highly influential books at the turn on the millennium wth theories that have been adopted by many; urban regenerators, community builders and policy makers. Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002) talks of a newly defined socioeconomic class, 'the creative class', that he believes are key driving forces for economic development in post-industrial cities. While Putnam's *Bowling Alone: The collapse and revival of American Community* (2000) focuses on the decline in social capital within the United States. He makes a distinction between the two types of social capital he believes exists, bonding capital and bridging capital, relating to the value of interaction between 'like' people and 'un-like' people, I will expand upon these later.

Both writers have since been heavily criticised for their theories and the negative implications they may have created as result. Putnam even releasing later studies that contradict some of his assumptions on diversity, proving the link may actually be negative and not beneficial (Putnam, 2007). Florida has now earned himself the title of 'ultimate champion of gentrification' (Wainwright, 2017). These criticisms hold substantial value, Putnam's work is used in many important organisations. It has been crucial in World Bank reports, even creating a social capital assessment tool based on his theory (Krishna and Shrader, 1999) (Grootaer and van Bastelaer, 2001). While the effects of Florida's theories have contributed to the changes in urban living all around us. We now see cities heavily investing in redevelopments accommodating for the needs of his 'creative class' (Regier, 2014) (Peck, 2005).

Richard Florida is famous for his concept of the 'creative class', first discussed in depth in *The rise of the creative class*. The book had influential implications in the field of urban regeneration. One of the main ideas discussed is how creative people don't necessarily move to find jobs, they want to live near other creative people, in diverse demographics, around entertainment and places to go out at night. By separating out creatives as a class of their own, Florida brings attention to their economic and social potential. This is one of the reasons creatives are able to form vast networks consisting of many layers. This is also evident in how some companies choose their location too.

"Keep your tax incentives and highway interchanges; we will go where the highly skilled people are." - Caroley Fiorina, Hewlett-Packard CEO

(as cited in Florida, 2002, p.6)

Florida essentially lays out how to increase the economic output of an area by making an area appealing to creatives, making them move into the area, followed by creative and tech industries (Florida, 2002). Pierre Bourdieu's Distinction tells us how those with a high cultural capita will create what is accepted as taste, with the rest of society bending to the views of the cultural elite (Bourdieu, 1984) .

Florida's plan to boost the economic output of cities by making them more appealing to creatives is believed to have contributed to the wave of new 'affordable housing' that greatly out-price the homes destroyed to build them. Further, increasing transport links — while enabling greater mobility — also increases the value of accommodation in the surrounding area (SERC, 2011). Florida's 'creative class' move in -- the less privileged locals have to move out. There is also criticism as to weather the influx of creative professionals really is the big economic force Florida makes it out to be (Kratke, 2010).

Revelations like this demonstrate how top down policy can sometimes not account for the intricacy of the effects at ground level. Florida focused on one group of people so much that his plan didn't really think of other groups of people.

"It forced me to confront this divisiveness," he says. "I realised that we need to develop a new narrative, which isn't just about creative and innovative growth and clusters, but about inclusion being a part of prosperity. It was the service class – the class I had forgotten – that was taking it on the chin." - Richard Florida (Wainwright, 2017)
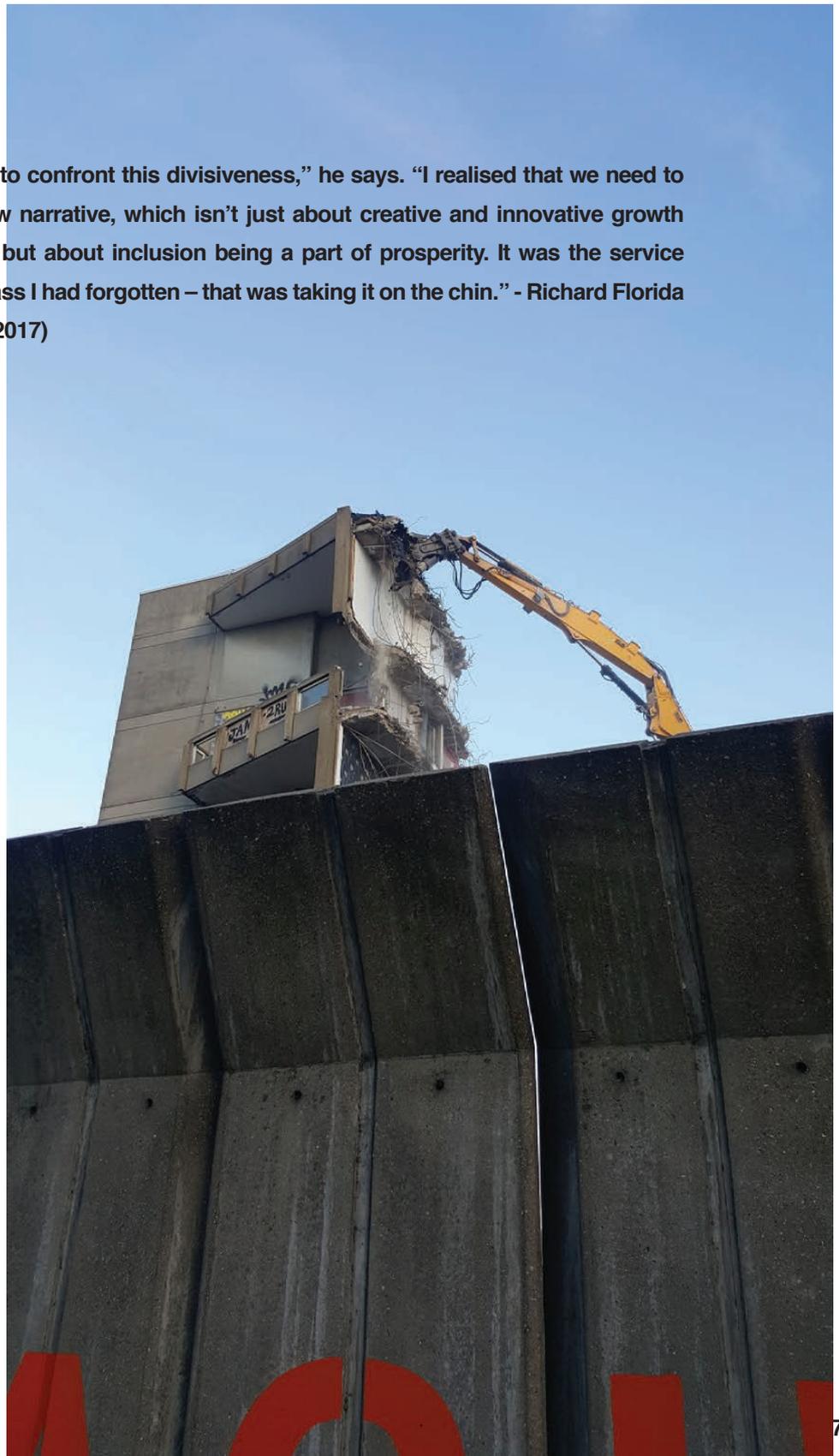
Robert Putnam's theory of social capital was broke into two parts: bonding capital and bridging capital. Bonding is socialising with people who you are 'like'. These are the people you share common traits with; ethnicity, religion, ethics, occupation, interests and so on. Bridging is when you interact with those who do not share common traits with you; they may be foreign, or support another sports team. To create a functional coexisting society both bonding and bridging capital must exist. (Putnam, 2000). The two support each other, with tension arising when either one declines. Putnam states:

"social capital refers to connections among individuals - social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them" (Putnam, 2000, p. 19).

Having a strong social capital benefits the individual as well as the community. Putnam describes it as being simultaneously a "private good" and a "public good" (Putnam, 2000, p.20). Putnam talks of interaction across groups as promoting understanding of one another and better feelings towards those who are un-like us.

"We come from all the divisions, ranks and classes of society ... to teach and be taught in our turn. While we mingle in these pursuits, we shall learn to know each other more intimately, we shall remove many of the prejudices which ignorance or partial acquaintance with each other had fostered.... In the parties and sects into which we are divided, we do not in so many respects regard as a brother... We may return to our homes and firesides with kindlier feelings toward one another, because we have learned to know one another better" (Putnam, 2000, p.23).

However, in 2007 the biggest survey of its kind was conducted. A five-year study of social capital in the US by Harvard University and University of Manchester resulted in finding that ethnic diversity could actually reduce social capital. The more diverse an area is, the lower the levels of happiness, political participation and trust between and within the ethnic groups. Putnam coined the phrase"hunkering" to describe this phenomenon (Putnam, 2007)

On the ground, ideologies of different political spectrums don't fall into the what is sometimes regarded by the left as just the status quo of the time. Not everybody accepts the new globalised model of community.

"Some critics (in the UK) on the right say that's all hogwash. What gets the conservatives irritated is that I say the task is not to 'make them like us' but to create a new 'we' - a new, more encompassing identity. They say: 'Why should we? We don't want a new we, we like the old we.' But in the US, we don't have that problem because we have changed in the past," (Bunting, 2017)

Diversity may still improve cultural and economic growth through the sharing of ideas and innovation but it interferes with trust — which is an important part of growing social capital. Putnam believes that civic educations is what is needed. He says that that in order to create a sense of national identity, acknowledgement of shared things is needed. Its not that that we all have to agree on everything, but we do need to have some things in common.

After the release of this report, Putnam is now looking into where new forms of social capital are developing and what makes them work -- singling out religion as an interest. He notes their 'low barriers to entry' but 'high levels of commitment'. He puts part of this success down to their 'honeycomb structure' consisting of many small groups that are part of one whole. "Putnam believes that this low entry/ honeycomb structure could be successfully copied to reinvigorate many other organisations" (Bunting, 2017).

What Florida and Putnam managed to do is package their ideas in a way that made them accessible to the people that mattered — their words spoke directly to policy makers. The problems we see around us could simply be teething problems on the way to a better connected globalised world, after all, transition costs come early - the benefits take longer. But even Putnam has seen the issue with applying macro ideas to the micro. Like with how the religious communities he now favours, the key is to start on the ground and work out. Starting with a grand vision is nearly impossible to work when you do not understand the intricacies and dynamics of the place you are imposing your ideas.

SO WHERE ARE CREATIVE COM THE UK?

Nick Clifton takes Richard Florida's theories based in the United States and examines the 'creative class' within the UK (Clifton, 2008). His results show that London is unequivocally the creative centre of the UK. These findings are re-affirmed by a similar study conducted by NESTA (NESTA, 2010) through a two-year collaboration with Birmingham and Cardiff Universities. Clifton's research ranked central west and central east London first and second, respectively, for their Creative Class Location Quotient.

"The research has shown that London is the heart of the creative industries in Britain, dominating in almost all creative sectors, and particularly in the most intrinsically creative layers of the value chain for each sector. The high level of geographical detail used in the mapping has allowed us to pin-point nine other creative hotspots across Britain. They are Bath, Brighton, Bristol, Cambridge, Guildford, Edinburgh, Manchester, Oxford and WycombeSlough." (NESTA, 2010)

Industrial and creative businesses benefit by existing in clusters as it gives them better access to the people and resources they need but also the opportunity of to learn and expand. Clifton's report however, goes further to not just examine those regions of high creative capacity but also finds reasons for those with the lowest Creative Class LQ. He draws attention to how a number of these locations are suffering the after effects of the loss of heavy industry, naming places such as; Stone on Trent, Barnsley and deindustrialised areas of big cities such as Tameside (Manchester) and Knowsley (Liverpool).

Miss Mansfield 2013-2014, Forest Town Miners' Welffare, Nottinghamshire, 2017 (Severn, 2017)

E THESE
MUNITES IN

Commissioned by the New York Times and VICE, photographer David Severn's series; *Thanks Maggie*, constructs a beautifully bleak image of social life in the post industrial British Midlands (Severn, 2017). Reports and statistics can only provide so much sense of a place, when combined with imagery it is easy to see why these places are not exactly creative havens.

Jo, A club singer, performing at Mansfield Woodshouse Ex-Serviceman's Club, Nottinghamshire (Severn, 2017)

Michael at the Skatepark, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire (Severn, 2017)

David Coleman, an ex-miner known locally as "The Pitman Poet" (Severn, 2017)

With this information and the previous sources on creative communities we can begin to build up a better picture of the creative scene in the UK; how different industries are spread across the country, why creative communities and industry clusters tend towards certain areas ands stay away from others, and why community - specifically creative communities — are crucial in forming a well co-existing and effective society.

PR**A**CTICE

MAKES PEREC

I will now begin to examine the practice's of creative professionals and organisations who work to cultivate and nurture creativity and creative communities. Understanding the methodology of others provides practical framework from which I can design solutions to similar problems around. After this, I will interview creatives who form part of an active creative community. These anecdotes will bring perspective to what creative communities mean to those who benefit from them and understand the benefits for creatives and non-creatives a like. Finally, I will expand upon my involvement in different creative communities, examining how they operate, the benefits and the issues.

CT

1 LOVE

I first met Jay and Nat from 1 Love Community during our Capsule 2051 project in March 2017 (see Appendix B). In October 2017 1 Love moved to their current home on Pepper St, right in the heart of what once would have been London's Docklands. Operating on a meanwhile lease, they now have until 2020 make use of four shop spaces, and six floors of office space for the benefit of community.

One shop has been turned into a community hub that acts as a central point for the site, offering space for community meetings and an area for children. Here people can come to discuss ideas for the project and any issues 1 Love could help to tackle, white boards and message boards aid to facilitate the sharing of ideas.

The part of 1 Love's methodology that stands out is the truthful connections they have to the people in their community. Love is not often openly talked about as a method of enacting change or problem solving within design, but it has enabled them to build high levels of trust and an impressive network of like-minded people in which support acts in both ways. This has influenced my practice a lot an forms the base ethos of my work, to aid in the development of mutually beneficial networks that can create solutions to problems at many levels.

DASH N' DEM

(Create, 2017)

(Create, 2017)

As Jennifer Williams showed (Williams, 2005), one of the main benefits of living in a community is the ability to share your opinions and experience on this things that affect everyday life. Bringing a creative output into this enables people to have their voices heard and understood and contribute to culture and change. In 2017 Create set Dash N' Dem the task of designing visual and audio guides for The Leaway — a new walking and cycling route connecting the Olympic Park to the East India Docks. Dash N' Dem enlisted the help of young teenagers from Spotlight Creative Youth Space, filtering the information through their eyes to create guides that are interesting and useful to the people who will see and hear them. By utilising LARP (live action role play) techniques, they brought context from videos and clips into reality, stimulating creative action. The group of young people had an interest in grime music, a genre birthed in the neighbouring areas. The group funnelled their ideas through this medium, a medium they all had interest in and wanted to learn about.

Formed in 2001, Ruff Sqwad was one of the original grime crews. Dash N' Dem and Create reached out to two of their members, Slix and Prince Rapid, to aid in the project and guide the teenagers through producing their own grime tracks. Seeing correlation between the way the match girls sing songs in their strike in 1888 and the grime 'diss' track, the team used this as well as samples from Edmund Burke's damning speech in the train of the East India Company to produce their own politically driven tracks.

The process they designed enabled the group to express their opinions on subjects such as wage, banks and data collection. Following a post-punk ideology where music creation is available and possible by anyone. Grime also follows this ethos, through simple and inexpensive tools, young people are finding they can have their voice projected to thousands of people, pushing their stories and issues into the mainstream. Through culture, people in power can be influenced to consider the views of more people, contributing to solving problems in communication and misrepresentation. But importantly, the young people involved in this project learned skills they can take forward in life. Not just how to produce music - which may become sustainable careers for some - but also how to express themselves and tap in to history to add context to the things they say. All of these things contribute to understanding how problems can be tackled through creativity. By embracing the the story of the environment and personal intersts, people can express themselves in a way that is relevant to them and develop their own methods.

CASEY NEIS

Technology now grants us the ability to grow and create communities through the internet in a way we have never seen before. My experience of creative communities starts off on tumblr, quickly the tumblr community also manifested in the physical world. People of different towns belonging to the same online community would meet up, share culture and form friendships. Nowadays Instagram dominates as the the tool used by creative people to share their content, network, grow communities and communicate. But its Youtube that has given particularly vloggers, filmmakers and musicians the platform to have their content seen by millions and cultivate huge communities. Thanks to Youtube and the decreasing price of high quality consumer electronics, creatives are able create and output amazing content at low cost from their own homes.

Casey Neistat is an American YouTube personality, filmmaker, vlogger, and co-founder of multimedia company Beme. His DIY approach to film making is what makes him unique. For him, it is all about the story, equipment is only there to aid in that. Often opting for affordable consumer cameras or even his mobile phone, Casey will happily sacrifice higher quality video for getting the shot (Neistat, 2015). Casey's vlogs go beyond entertainment to teach people his filmmaking methodology and inspire others to pick up a camera and tell stories. He believes that filmmaking is the greatest story telling device ever created and now that power is in everybody's pocket (Neistat, 2018).

What Casey has done is make making films cool. No longer is film a medium where you need to study for many years, invest lots of money and put in long 'boring' hours to tell a story. Filmmaking can be cheap, fun, full of action and push you to adventure and try new things. Casey is attempting to bring a culture of creation to the mainstream, to push people everywhere to have a medium where they can confidently speak and voice their ideas and opinions. Though in a more hands-off way compared to the workshops Dash N' Dem hosted, he is teaching people valuable skills they can use in life but in a format sandwiched between a storyline, consumable in under ten minutes.

Snapshot from: Best Vlogging Camera Sony vs. Canon (Neistat, 2017)

Screenshot from: The Helicopter Roper Ladder (Neistat, 2016)

INTERVIEWS

KOSI TIDES, JACK JETSON & TOSHIRO STEEL

To further my understanding of how creative communities exist around me and what they mean to those who belong to them, I interviewed some friends and creative professionals. First of all I spoke to Kosi Tides, Jack Jetson and Toshiro Steel, all three are rappers from North East England, but now reside in Leeds. I invited the guys to stay at my house for a few days so they could produce music, film music videos and do a couple of interviews while they where in London.

Jetson describes his music as as a form of escapism - being about real life situations, the North and the culture he grew up with. Dash N' Dem used a similar methodology where they tapped into the rich history of a location and combined it with personal opinion, expressed in a form that worked for them. He tells me how they typically make music at "Tides' yard" (Kosi's house) and that when creating with friends its easier to not overthink, things just pass through him — a feeling of divine intervention he says. Jetson describes the feeling that many people feel when working in collaboration, when something else emerges, it can feel as if what you create isn't just you or the person/s you're working with, its something with a life of its own. I ask Kosi what a creative community is to him:

> "I guess a creative community would be a group of friends dong something creative. It could be anything really, anything thats creating. It could be painting, it could be making music, singing coir, just creating."

He describes it in its purest form, just people being creative. There doesn't have to be much to it. But does where matter? Kosi reports that that the creative scene in Leeds is small and can be pretty slow but there is talent among them. They drive down to London because it is a more productive place to be, there are always something going on. There are more people to work with and better access to facilities and resources. Although Leeds has great creative universities and a small creative scene, it is not mentioned at all in Nick Clifton's paper. Whether this is an oversight or not it means that Leeds isn't necessarily a place brimming with creativity, neither is it without. As I talk to the guys I began to build up a better idea of what it is that young creatives need to pursue their craft. They need access to resources, but most fundamentally they need to be in a productive environment, somewhere there are people working towards a similar goal.

It is important to enable creativity in people, particularly from those who have stories and opinions we might not get to hear often. Like Casey, these guys exhibit a fully DIY practice. The mission is to record and get it out to the world whichever way works best in the moment. None of the three have any creative education, everything is learned and created by themselves. This puts them in a different category than most the creatives I associate everyday. They are not in the same bubble. This means they may well have useful viewpoints to add to the picture and bring better understanding to what life is like for somebody different to us.

"I just try to depict as true a form of representation of what I go through as I can, from all angles. I think that one thing I'm good at is seeing how other people might see a situation as opposed to my angle. That doesn't really mean I'm gonna change anything, but I'm aware

… If people relate to me, people relate to me. I'm just hear to tell my story"

Like the teenagers making grime mixtapes in East London, people are more conscious and aware than it might seem, and ready to let you know what they think — if they are given the chance.
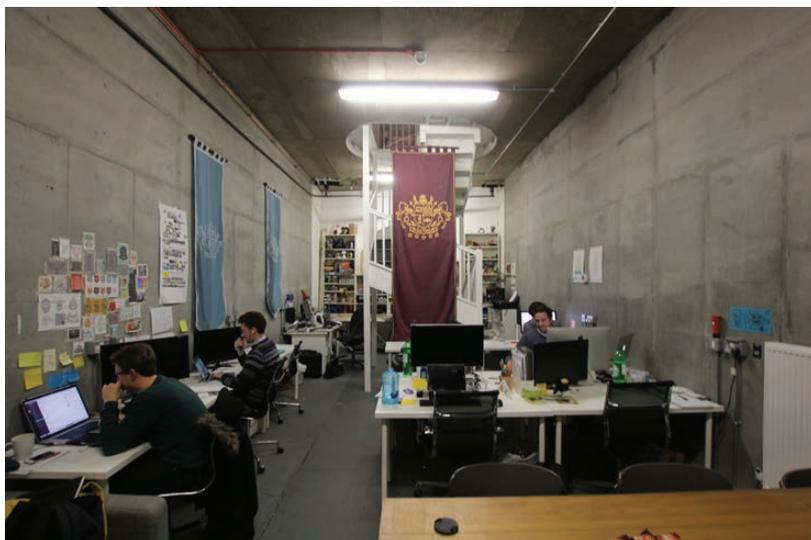
SAM HILL

A space specifically designed to give creative professionals the facilities and resources they need at their finger tips is Makerversity. Accommodating for individual practitioners all the way up to small businesses, it is a co-creation space with workshop facilities that gives small businesses the tools and space they need to make. I spoke to Sam Hill, co-founder of Pan Studio and the Run an Empire mobile game. Sam and his team inhabit the Vaults, a row of self-contained studios deep in the basement of Somerset House.

His definition of a creative community is:

> "A digital or physical space where people with complimentary creative skillsets are able to bounce ideas off each other, collaborate and work in a positively spirited way."

A more professional angle on the question, Sam speaks on the utilitarian advantage of a creative community. The creative industries are changing and we see more multidisciplinary practices being adopted. This comes with the downside that there will usually always be someone better at specific skills than you. By existing in community a greater quality and professionalism can be achieved by sharing skills. Sam speaks of how socialising with other creatives stops people becoming stuck in a particular way of thinking, but informally discussing ideas with people who bring a different approach to design or happen to have experience in the area opens up new ways of looking at problem.

Makerversity has been designed to enable this characteristic. Placing practitioners together in a positive social environment catalyses the birth of new ideas and directions. Sam describes how the culture of the space Compares to that of WeWork another co-working space. WeWork exists more as an office manager, where small business and start ups can avoid high office costs in London by sharing a space. They are typically more business focused, concerning with being agile, making a product and taking it to market quickly. Makerversity offers more than just a desk space, it offers more of a university feel, where the spirit of learning and a communal feel take precedent over fancy office space.
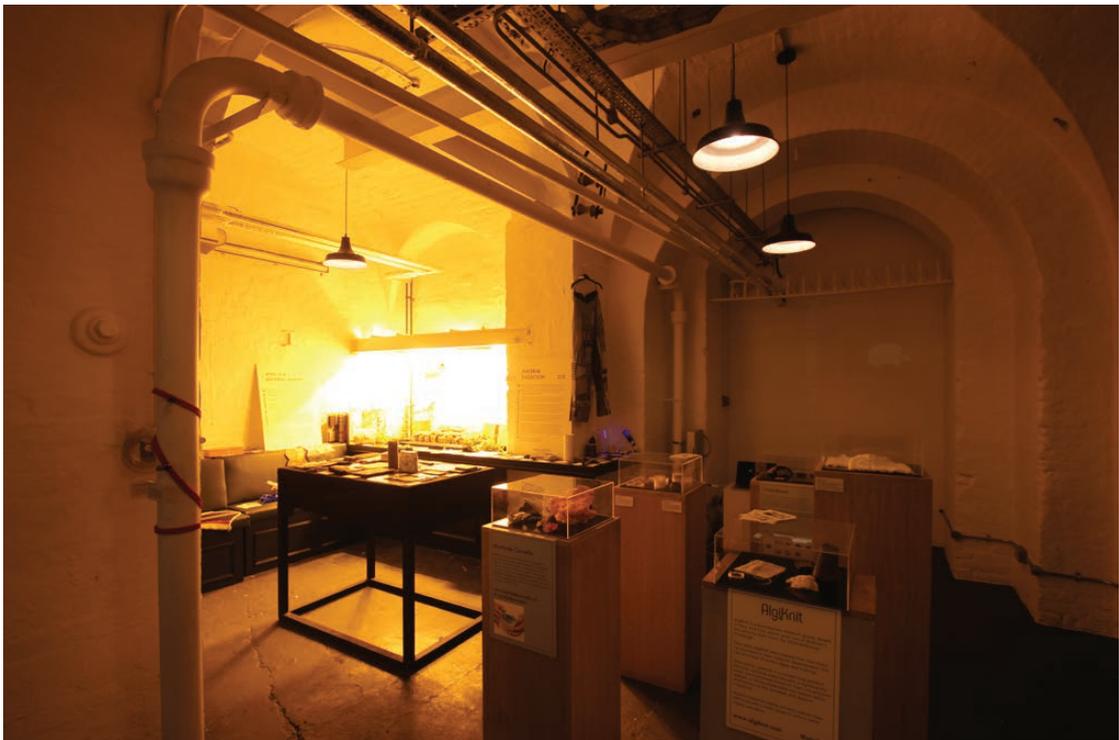
MARK EDMONDS

Mark Edmondson is the digital media manager at Goldsmiths, University of London. His position sees him enabling students from non-creative subjects to conduct projects that rely on some form of media use. Mark began to act as a central hub for people who needed access to digital media facilities, with his suite filled with students from all over the campus. He describes how the students start to come together and discuss their projects — then "something happens".

"So down at the bottom there, with the headphones on, you have Rachel, she's fine art. I introduced her to computing students because she's interested in doing VR work. She can't do that in her own department. So she works with computer students who have shown her how to use different programs she had never used before, and has been able to gain access to the facilities in computing where she can do new things."

Mark is a catalyser of collaboration. He see's how problems can be solved through working with relevant people, forming a network of people with different skills wiling to use them to help others. Mark now wants to materialise that network to create a platform where people within the university can get help from; teachers, technicians and other students, — "setting up a community of practice where nobody really falls through the cracks". At the moment a group is being set up using Microsoft Teams, a platform that enables workplace chat and sharing of information while enabling it to co-exists with Goldsmiths' existing Office 365 ecosystem. The system would also work to keep everyone in the know about what is going on around the campus.

"So when visual cultures are putting on an exhibition in the church, and they need some expertise to do a specific thing, they can say;

Exhibition 'This day.
We need: 'This, this, this and this'

…they can find help a lot faster."

Mark believes that bringing a community aspect does more than just facilitate a students work. It creates a support network. A spirit of well being is conducive to community -- which enables people to grow as a person as well as a practitioner. Mark's system is familiar to how I and others now use Instagram to ask for help and respond when others need it.

What I have learned from talking to these people is that a community needs a space to exist in, whether it is physical or digital, there needs to be a location where interaction takes place. In the traditional form of community that space could be a neighbourhood, where sites such as barbershops or pubs act as points where discussion and the sharing of ideas can take place.

VOXI

One thing I am weary of when trying to stimulate a creative creative community is forcing it. In Summer 2017 I began working as a content creator for VOXI. While their main branding was the work of Olgivy & Mather, VOXI utilised Latimer Group's co-creation platform Bulbshare (Bulbshare, 2017). The purpose of the app is to build a community that brands can interact with and give briefs to, producing media content for the brand. The premise seems great and works well with VOXI's vision to connect with its audience and be on a level with it's 16-25 year old market -- but in reality it would be hard to define it as a community. All definitions from the people I talked to about what a community is mentioned collaboration. Although a few people have worked together on briefs, it does not form part of the base of the platform. Instead the focus amongst the creators is receiving payment for the content they produce in a linear system from creator to brand. Comments on the app are barely used and there is no sharing of ideas or much communication at all between the creators. If a creative community is to form there needs to be a sharing of skills and ideas, and not just be in it purely for monetary gain but to bring an element of vocation.
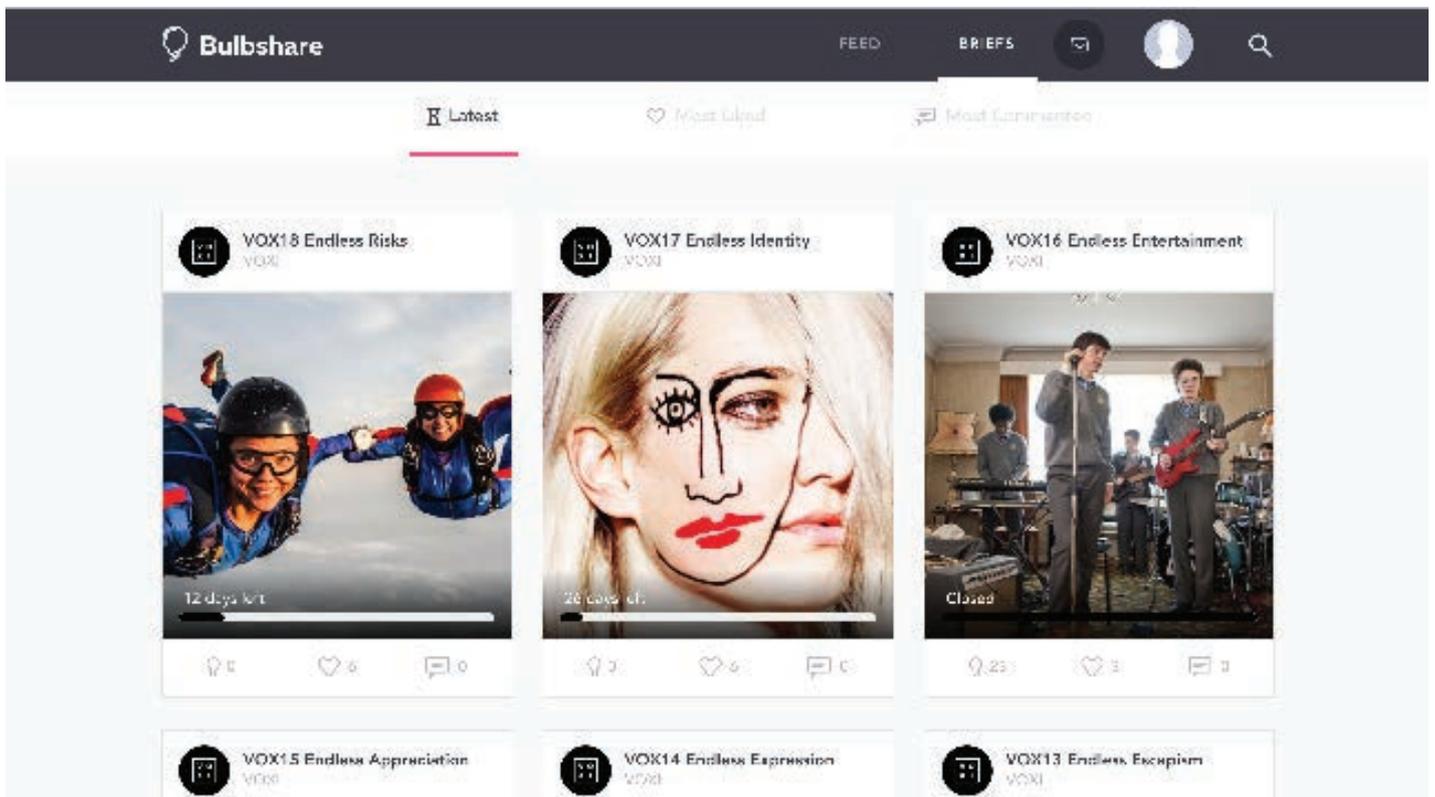
How do you avoid creating this scenario? Firstly, as I learned from my interviews, the community needs a space to exist in. A platform exists but if we think of it in terms of how Richard Florida said attracted the creative class, its the lifestyle of a space that attracts creative people. People want to feel good in the space they exist in.

MULTIUSE OFFICE
SPACE

MULTIUSE OFFICE
SPACE

STORA
CREAT
FLOOR

STORA
CREAT
FLOOR

BIKE REPAIR
SHOP

1 LOVE PEPPER
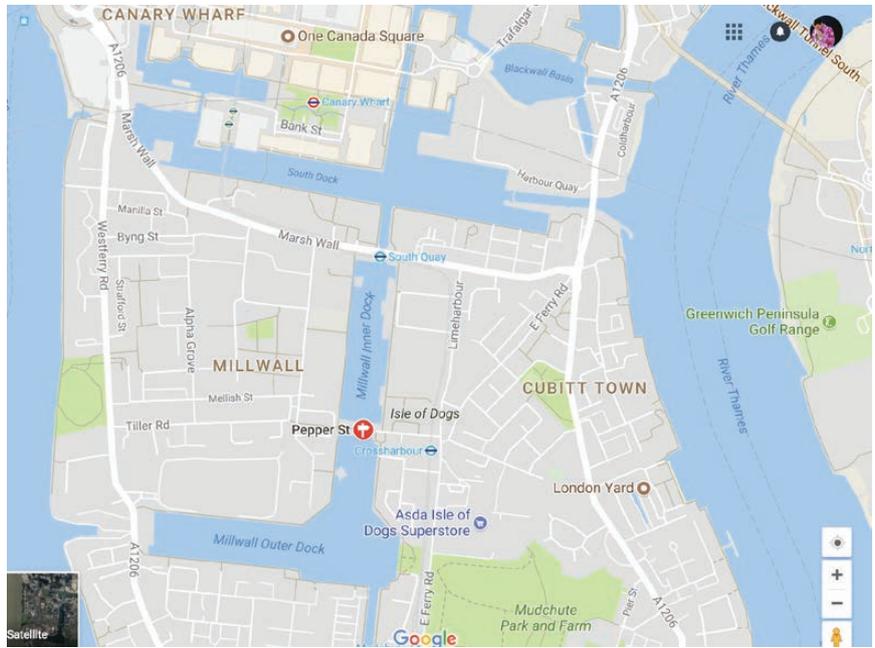
(Google Maps, 2017)

AGE/
IVE SPACE
R 2

OFFICE /
HOT DESKING

AGE/
IVE SPACE
R 1

EVENT SPACE

COMMUNITY HUB /
CHILDRENS AREA

FURNITURE SHOP 2
(UPCYCLING)

FURNITURE SHOP 1
(MAIN SALES)

STREET COMPLEX

music production

photo/video cove

editing suite

interchangable
backdrop
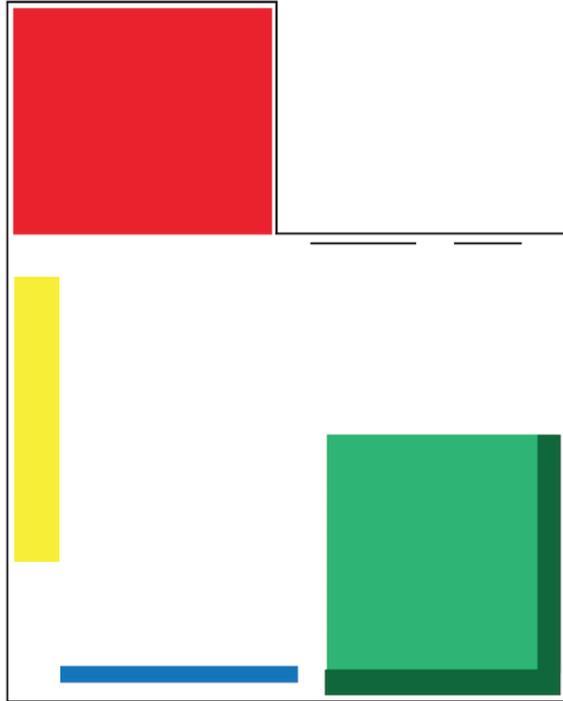
PROPOSA

FLOOR 1

textiles

printing

art/making (messy)

art/making (non messy)

tool wall
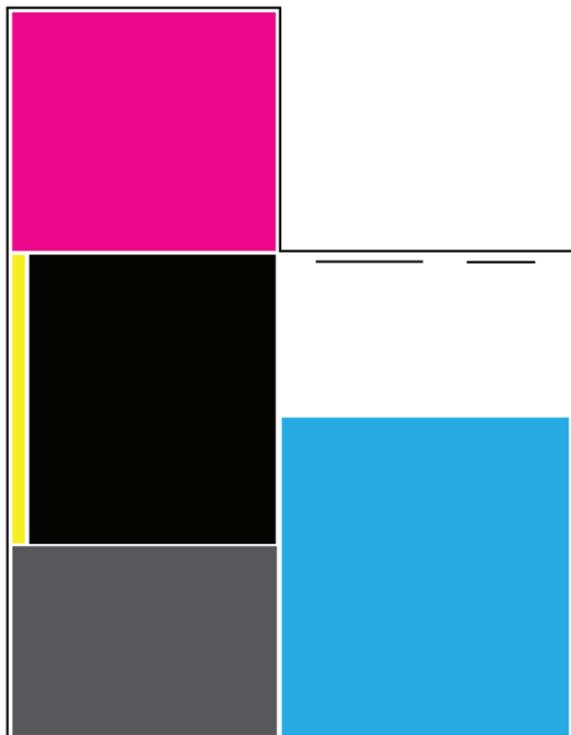
AL

By staying in contact and involved with 1 Love, over time I developed a great relationship with Jay. I was consulted for ideas for the new space and soon we started to discuss possibilities of what the space could become. I presented the idea of using two floors of the office space, currently used for storage, to turn into a creative space for all people. Jay believed in the idea and I drew up a proposal to illustrate the space and show how it would be used (see Appendix D). The space would be a place for all to be creative. I don't believe that expression and creation should only be for those who are trained in it, all people should be allowed the opportunity. The site would become a part of 1 Love's program of community engagement and also fit the needs of creative professionals alike, closing the gap between people and the creative industries. Engaging in creative activities will allow people in the local area to express their ideas and opinions. As *Uncommon People* (Willams, 2005) talks about, strengthening their voice and self, bringing on a feeling of well-being. The skills people learn can be used to directly benefit the community. As 1 Love find and generate projects, there is a direct source of talent to connect with, something Mark Edmondson highlighted in our interview.

The Creative Community Buider's Handbook tells us how non-integrated strategies between community initiatives can add to problems. By existing within the existing 1 Love network, the creative hub seeks to strengthen an existing project rather than start from scratch. In their suggestions to policymakers, NESTA says that people should try to "catalyse existing clusters, rather than try to build new ones from scratch" (NESTA, 2010, p.5). From this central hub projects can start to run that attempt to catalyse other latent communities throughout the UK. Nick Clifton and NESTA's maps of creative Britain can serve as research to target certain areas, allowing us to understand the current approach to creativity in that area and what industries are close by to work with and direct people towards.

Making the space attractive to Richard Florida's 'creative class' needs to be done right, as although his theories have some truth, they have been heavily criticised. We would also be dealing with a very 'wide' creative class. The location of the space and the community 1 Love already exists in is diverse, by race, by wealth and by age. This is exactly what I want, but creating a space that such a wide demographic enjoys being in could be tricky. Robert Putnam's later research (Putnam, 2007) also details how diversity can decrease trust in communities. But this is one of the aspects the space aims to tackle. By allowing diverse groups to interact around a creative activity, ideas and opinions can be shared, increasing bridging capital. As the different people find similarities and feel as if they are part of a community together they then become less 'un-like' each other and become 'like', stimulating bonding capital. With a constant influx of new people both bridging and bonding capital can be achieved and overall social capital can increase.

The hub would see experienced and non-experienced creatives working together. Those with experience tutoring and providing workshops for those who do not. Makerversity has a similar scheme where they invite people to host workshops that the pubic can access (Makerversity, n.d.).

My next stage is to start to plan how these workshops could operate. Taking inspiration from Dash N' Dem's work with teens in east London , Casey Neistat's DIY method and the Voice over workshop I took part in (see Appendix E), I want to help people learn the basic skills to create and how they can do so with limited resources.

I conducted an experiment with the rappers from Leeds to see if we could create a song and produce a music video in the three days that they were here. Using basic equipment, facilities and sites in the local area, the song was written and recorded in one night, the video prepped and filmed on the second, and edited on the third (see Appendix F). Through this I gained a better understanding of what aspects of the process where important to producing a quality product with such limitations. Using these principles I want to conduct workshops at the 1 Love site on basic music and video production. With the space already available it would be important to get the project started and test what works and establishing the projects existence before expanding into a full creative space.

Though 1 Love support the project, they are only the holders of the space and can not provide the large amount of funding it would take to create a fully operational creative space. This is a problem with the grand vision for the project among others, but starting small with what is currently available is crucial to fulfil the projects goal of forming a creative community.

CONCLUSION

Creativity is not necessarily equal throughout the UK. There are people everywhere who aren't able to openly express themselves, environments that do not support a culture of creation and expression, and places that don't have open access to make.

Freedom of expression is a human right. But what good is that when only the few know how to express themselves and be heard?

By enabling creativity in people I seek to improve their quality of life and contribute to the building of a better society for all the different people who inhabit it. The method in which that is conducted should be from a grass rooted start and seek develop communities that are more self reliant on problem solving and having their voices heard.

It is inspiring to see more organisations and institutions reaching out to under-represented communities, understanding the mutual benefit of doing so. When I went to one of the first Tate Late sessions held at the Tate Britain, there was a celebration of British grime and hip hop culture. I had never seen so many young and diverse people in an art gallery, it was beautiful. Watching hundred's of people jumping to House of Pharaoh's "Run With Me", surrounded by priceless art, a thought passed through my mind.
'Wow, are they really letting us do this?'
That thought embodies what I want to overcome in this work. Who are 'they', who are 'us', and why is there disbelief in 'letting' us express ourselves in a building of cultural expression?

If creativity is for everyone, it must be made fairly available to everyone, but that is only possible if people want it. As it stands, people do not see the wide benefits of enabling creativity in people. Whether somebody believes art subjects don't have a use in their area, or believe there is nothing in it for them to allow a bunch of teenagers to shout down a microphone. Educating people on the benefit of existing within a community and the power of making and expressing while creating the facilities to do so is hopefully the right direction to take to build a better society for us all.
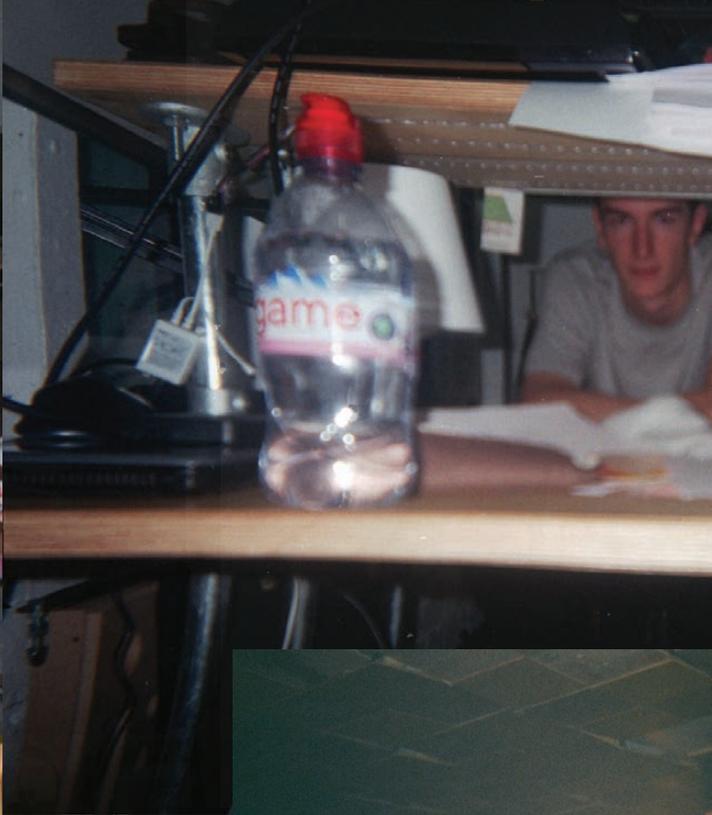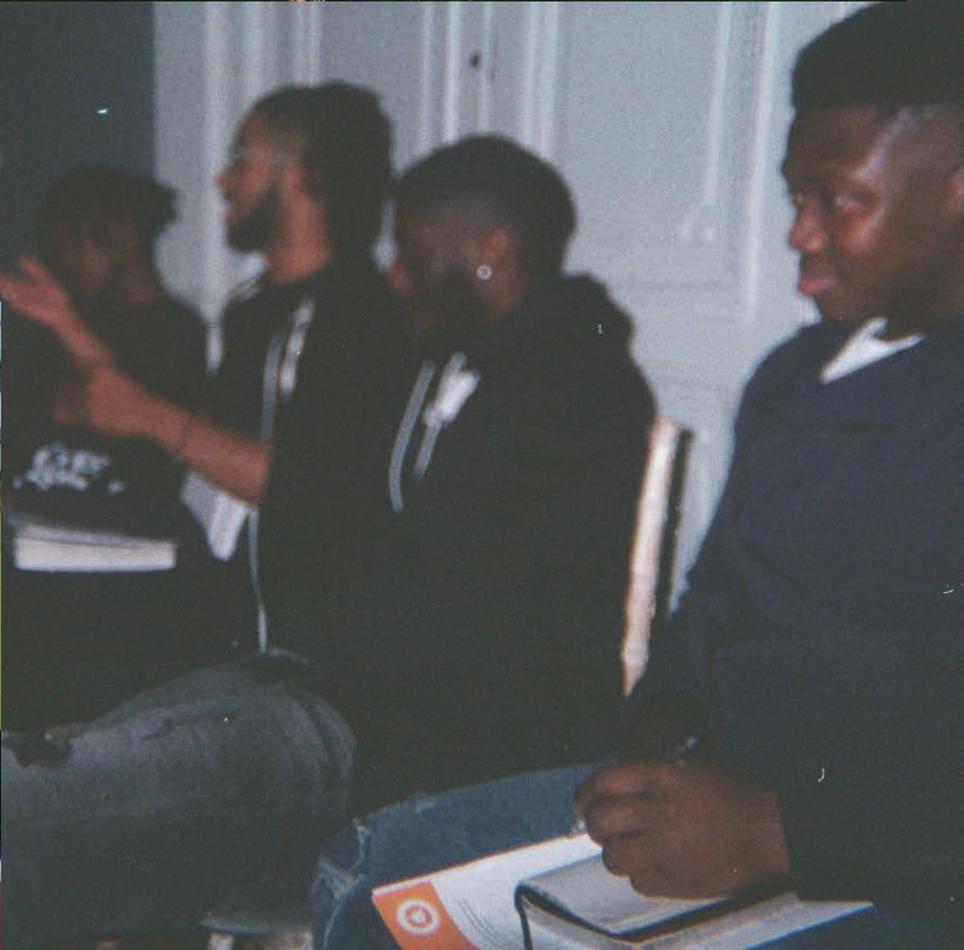
APPENDIX A

Capsule 2051

Capsule 2051 (Capsule 2051, 2017) was the name of our live brief project in second year studies. Set with the task of 'raising hope in Lambeth' we quickly found that most people we spoke to in the community did not have much hope for the future. We aimed to combat this by creating a workshop that brought together people of different positions within the community, to envision speculative futures based on modern day issues.

APPENDIX B

1 Love

1 Love is an social initiative seeking to create viable, actual change and improvement to the quality of life of people in the city by 'harnessing underused resources to connect people and places' (1 Love Community, 2017). It is a grassroots network that reaches out into local communities to provide support, knowledge and activities that improves health, responsibility and security to both the urban environment and its inhabitants (BigLunchExtras, 2016). With a universal 'one love' philosophy, well-being is at the core of everything they do. 1 Love's first major project was to transform a derelict patch of inter-city land in to a eden-like escape in the middle of the city.

The Nomadic Gardens in Shoreditch are a community garden that brings together people from all walks of life to mix together amongst the vegetable beds, quirky up-cycled furniture and vibrant street art. There is a cafe van to buy hot drinks and snacks from and the stage provides space for all kinds of entertainment and activity. The intention for the site was to be unstructured and free, open and welcoming to all.

1 Love found their next home on the Isle of Dogs in what once was an NHS clinic. This time the vision was broader — to create an environment of community space and business. The 1 Love pop up shop was a great success. Every inch of the space was put to use While the main front of the shop collected and sold unwanted furniture, other rooms offered a children's play area, hairdressing salon, and spaces for workshops, parties and film screenings. In doing this 1 Love firmly placed themselves within the community and offered help and resources to anyone who needed it. The shop became a hub for the community. The open nature and wholly welcoming spirit of Jay, Nat and everybody involved magnetised the space - which began creating new connections between disparate people.

In October 2017 1 Love moved to their current home on Pepper St, right in the heart of what once would have been London's Docklands. The formula would stay the same but this time there is a lot more space to work with.

ONE LOVE CREATIVE SPACE PROPOSAL

Making is for everybody. Everybody has a story to tell, an opinion to express, an idea to realise. The act of making is part of being human and everybody should have the opportunity to do so.
As the role that community plays in society changes rapidly before our eyes, disappearing in some cases, creative communities bond together.

A creative community is a network of people who actively make in a positively spirited way towards one another. Getting people to make together is a way of forming community.

The creative hub at One Love will offer space and resources to creative people of all types who need it. But it will also be a place where typically non-creative people can come and learn to make and express themselves and be part of something. Allowing people of different ages, backgrounds, cultures and abilities to create together and learn from one another. Giving people the ability to communicate in ways they haven't before, for new stories to be told and innovative ideas to be generated.

WHAT WILL THE SPACE OFFER?

Floor 2:
Music
Photography
Video
Editing

Sharing of resources
Sharing of knowledge
Sharing of time
Collective problem solving
Floor 1:   **Innovative**
Textiles   **Awareness of society and culture**
Printing
Painting
Art/making space

HOW WILL IT WORK?

Each facility will have its own per hour rates with discounted rates for those who need it.
(Discounts will be offered to young people, students, elders and also for outstanding circumstances.)

Free workshops will give the ability for everybody to take part in activities.

Creative people who wish to use the space can do so at discounted rates or for free by creating and hosting workshops for people.

We will actively look for active briefs and projects for the users of the space, bringing work to people. We will also generate our own projects for inhabitants to conduct, creating a collective output for the space itself.

WHO'S INVLOVED?

The space will be run by a team of actively creative people, floor 1 will need at least one person present at all times for safety. Creative people in the area and creative students will be targeted for positions within the hub. When not working, staff have access to the facilities to use for their own practice. Staff will also be encouraged to make and host workshops while also actively scouting for other creative people who could run workshops in the space.

Initially a team of striving independent creatives will be brought in to build and start workshops. these people will be young leaders in their field and will have the necessary experience to inspire other young people.

Once momentum has been gained. professionals with workshop will be brought in to run more structured and developed workshop from which defined skills can be learned and developed.

LOCATION

The new location for the One Love Community offers excellent space for a range of applications. 2 floors each 110m² (1184.03 ft²) will allow adequate space for what the community needs. The space has great transport links being 200m from Crossharbour DLR station and a short walk to the jubilee line from Canary Wharf underground station.

The location, situated on the Isle of Dogs is an interesting and shifting landscape. From 1802 to 1939. the area was one of the busiest docks in the world. Then is the 80s the area became an urban enterprise zone, birthing Canary wharf complex and one of the worlds biggest growers of economic capital. But this shifting topography has had a big impact on the social capital of the area. With the introduction of this creative hub we hope bridge the social gap, bringing together people of all demographics forming new communities.

FLOOR 2

music production

photo/video cove

editing suite

interchangable
backdrop
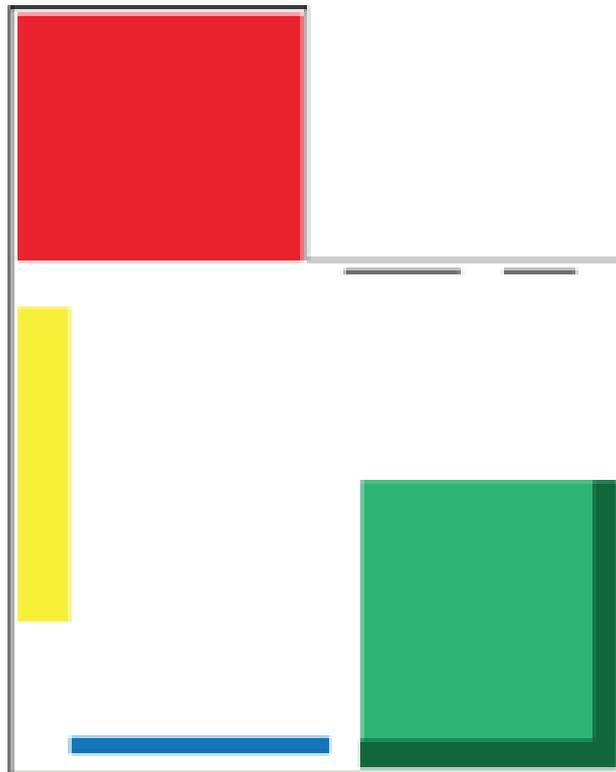
FLOOR 1

textiles

printing

art/making (messy)

art/making (non messy)

tool wall
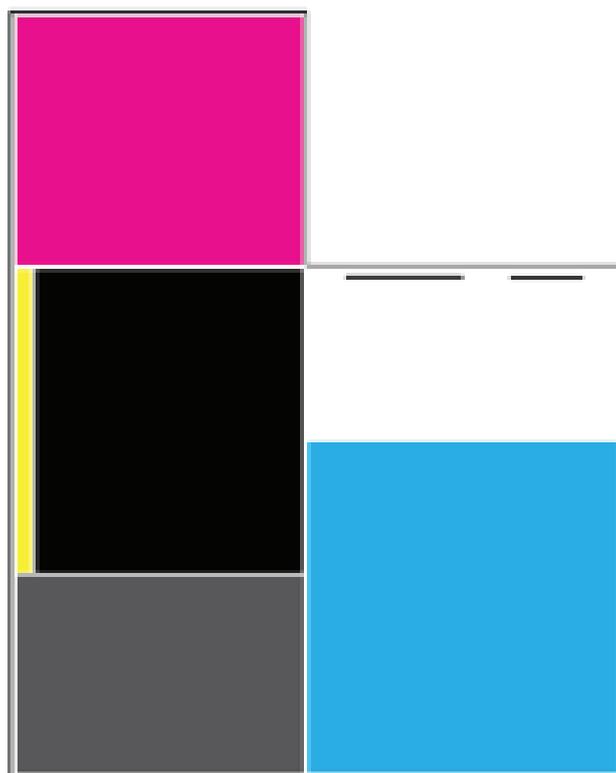
Apendix E

Voice over

In December 2017 as an optional workshop of our coursel took part in a workshop where we experimented with the relationship between language and the environment (Brown and Ng, 2017). By using samples of printed out lyrics from popular songs and combining them with three pieces of text of our own, relating to our project, we created scripts —or new pieces of text. We then searched for 20 images to put into a slideshow that would play while we read our text. This created an interesting and humorous combination of words and imagery. Next we paired up and combined our texts to create something new. I worked with Ines and we formed a script based on two different figures giving motivational speeches to a crowd. My speech would be from the perspective of an old jazz musician, talking to the cast and crew of a production. Ines' would be from the position of an ant soldier commanding her forces. Working with voice actors we recorded the script and created a video from found imagery. Again something new was created, another interesting combination of words and imagery. This squaring factor of the workshop led to a film that none of us could have conceived of from the original source material, but it was there laced through out it. A rapid prototyping of sorts it teaches people how to create a text based on issues that concern them which is a skill that can be used on its own, but also combines that with the ability to pair that with visuals. Experimenting with video software this workshop could be used get people into the basics of music video editing.

APPENDIX F

72hr Music Video

This project was done to see if a song and music video could be written and produced with limited resources in a short amount of time. We produced wrote, recorded, planned, shot and edited the song a music video over 3 days and were very pleased with the results (Brown, 2017). The song was written and recorded in my living room on a mic and mixer bought for around one hundred pounds. The guys wrote their lyrics and recorded them straight into the computer where Toshiro assembled the song. The next day I collected lighting equipment from university and we filmed part of the video also in my living room and at One Tree Hill in Honour Oak, a five minute drive from my house. The video was filmed on a Canon 550d, a seven year old entry level DSLR a camera that can be bought for around two hundred pounds today. A fifty pound hand held stabiliser was used to remove shake and allow smooth motion. The lights where the key here though they enabled me to shoot on the Canon's basic 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 kit lens in the dark, which gave me the advantage of added built in stabilisation and wider angle lens compared to the 50mm f/1.8 which is more zoomed in but would allow me the shoot in less light.

With prior knowledge of music video editing I was able to turn the footage into a fairly clean looking music video. What I learned here is crucial to producing a good music video is, good lighting and a range of collared gels and stabilisation. The rest is just your creativity. It doesn't really matter what camera you use as long as it can shoot 1080p, even a mobile phone could do. However even all of this can be thrown in the trash and imagination let free, low quality video can also be used it just how you you use it. This is simply a base formula to start producing music videos that can be combined with other methods and other instruments used to mx it up. I hope projects like this could form part of my work shop in my studio project to teach people how to create music videos: quickly, cheaply and effectively.

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