

Baker & Bliss:
Glowing and Growing,
a dynamic,
immersive and interactive
glow-in-the-dark installation

Lou Baker & Oly Bliss
Light Night, Worcester, UK,
9th - 15th February 2024

There is always
fight in the
DARK





LIGHT NIGHT WORCESTER



Glowing and Growing with Baker and Bliss

Take part in FREE drop-in workshops
on 10, 11, 12 and 13 February, 10am - 4pm

Immerse yourself in this magical glow-in-the dark installation during Light Night
on 14 and 15 February, 6 - 9pm. While you're there, you are invited to add something to the
Glowing and Growing Installation.

For more information visit: www.severnarts.org.uk

Facebook Twitter Instagram @severnarts



Glowing and Growing is a site-responsive,
glow-in-the-dark, participatory installation,
facilitated by artists Lou Baker and Oly Bliss. It
was commissioned by
Severn Arts for Worcester's Light Night,
February 9th – 15th 2024.



Glowing and Growing visitor numbers:

- 4 drop-in workshop days, 10-4 = 2852
(Average 118/hour)
- 2 Light Nights, 6-9 = 2575 (Average
429/hour)
- Community/Educational day = 32

Total: 5459

Glowing and Growing focuses on community engagement and developing strategies for wellbeing and improving mental health.

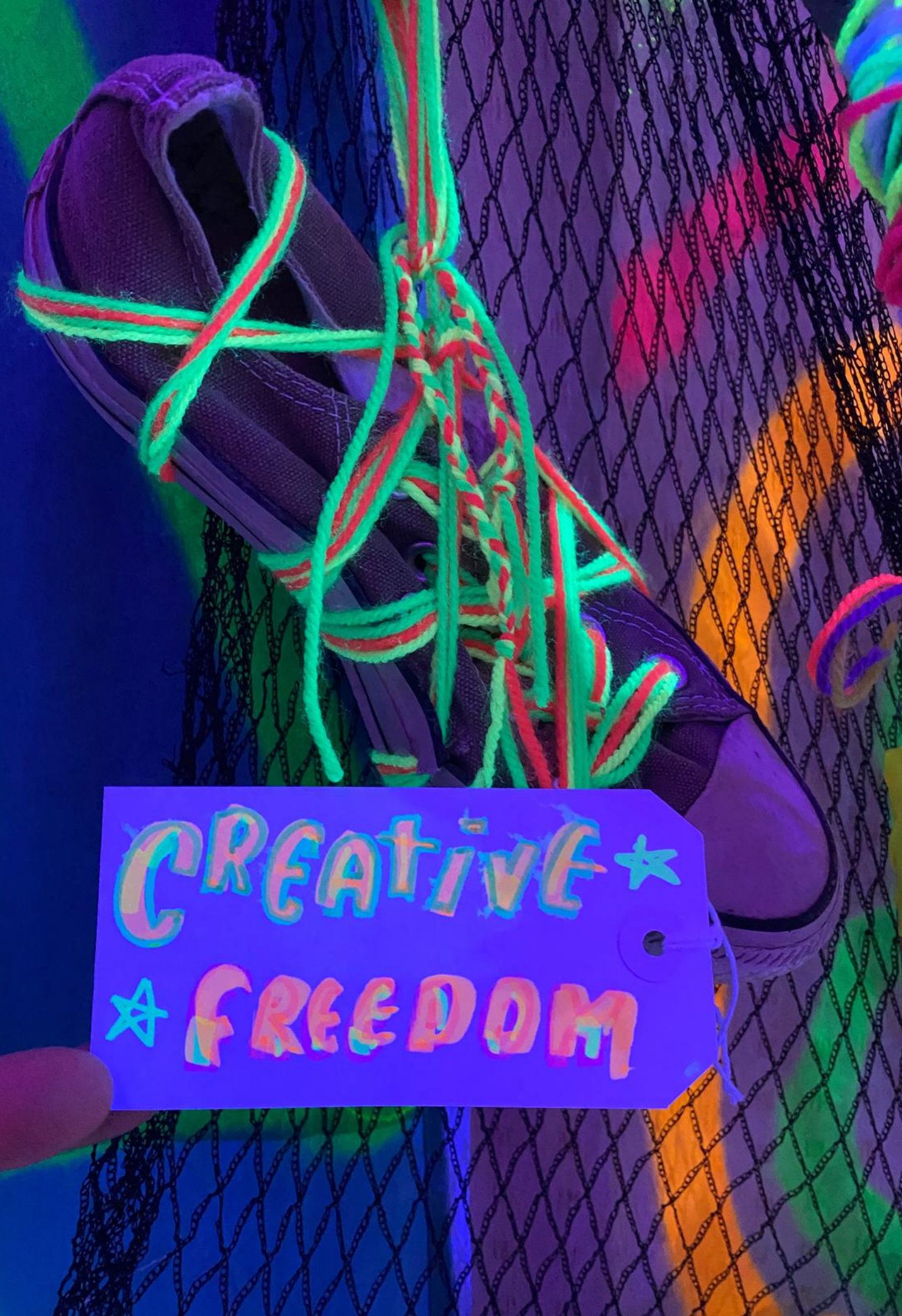
Research shows that making is good for you; making art with others, working side by side, often enables unexpectedly deep conversation and connection. This in turn helps build communities.



COMMUNITY ART
IS AN INCREDIBLE
POWER WHERE LOVE
+ JOY CAN OVERCOME
~~much~~ SARAH BLACKBURN

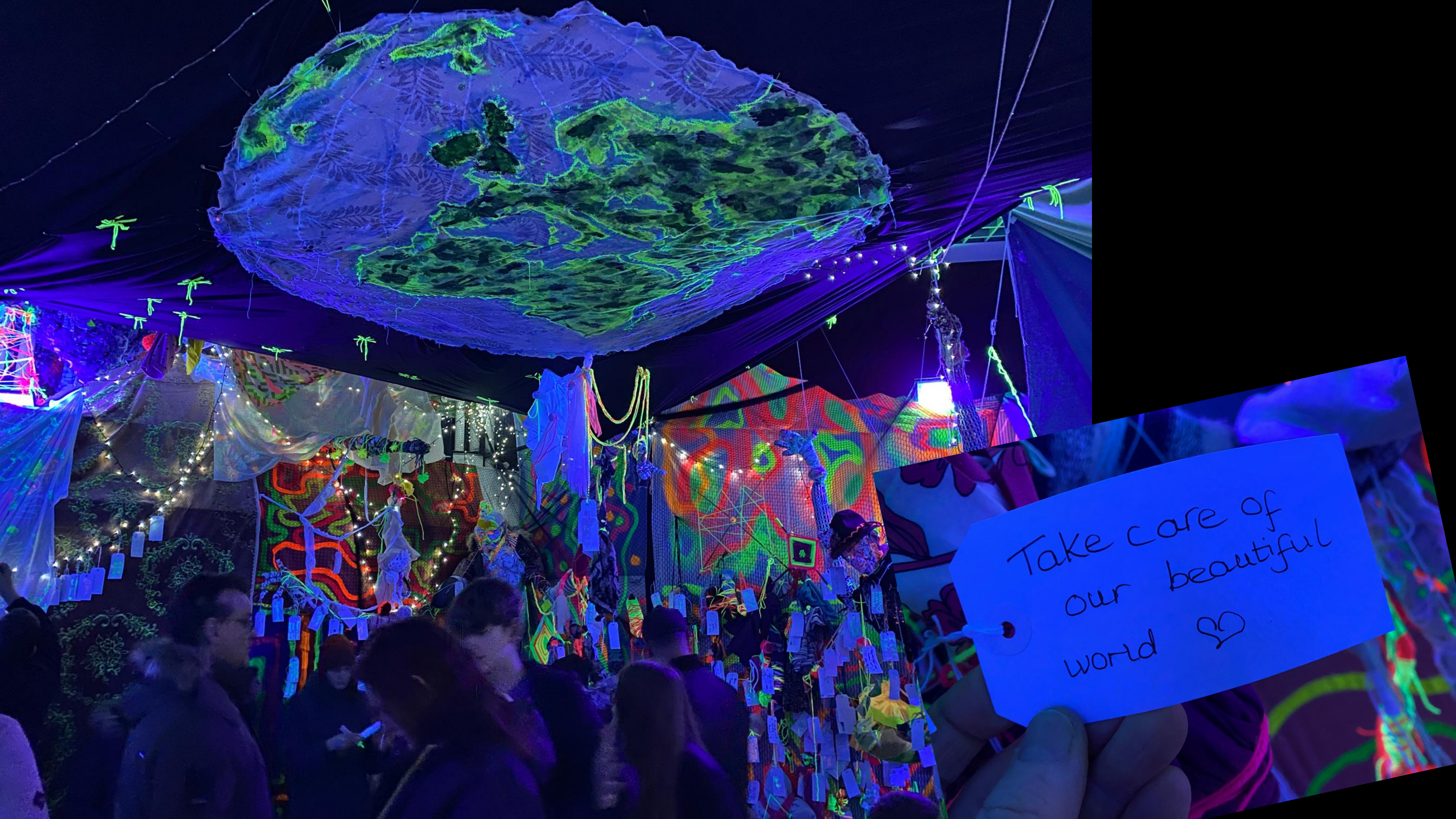


I have enjoyed
everything and
this has let me
express myself :)



CREATIVE *
* FREEDOM

Glowing and Growing also highlights issues surrounding textile waste. Most of the materials are second hand and will be reused again and again.



Take care of
our beautiful
world ♡

Baker & Bliss are both committed to working towards more sustainable art practices. They're conscious that this art project will, sadly, not make a big difference to the shocking statistics of the disposal of textiles in the UK but hope that it will at least raise awareness of some of the issues.

In a world where you can
be anything, BE KIND!
HELP SAVE THE PLANET ♡

Lets do
Better!
Andrea x

THE UK
DUMPS
360,000
OF CLOTHES
PER YEAR

A GREAT WAY TO
EDUCATE ABOUT THE
WASTE CREATED BY THE
FASHION INDUSTRY!

MRS B
RASHU + MARTO
NO PLANET B

Baker & Bliss transformed an empty shop in the Crowngate Shopping Centre, Worcester, into a magical, psychedelic, walkthrough space using large neon painted panels made with used domestic textiles, netting, a selection of knitted and stitched sculptures and blacklights.

They were very grateful for all the wonderful support from the Severn Arts team and volunteers.





In the days leading up to the Light Nights,
from Friday 9th Feb - Tuesday 13th Feb,
visitors were invited to make their own
glow-in-the-dark sculptures and add them to
the growing installation.

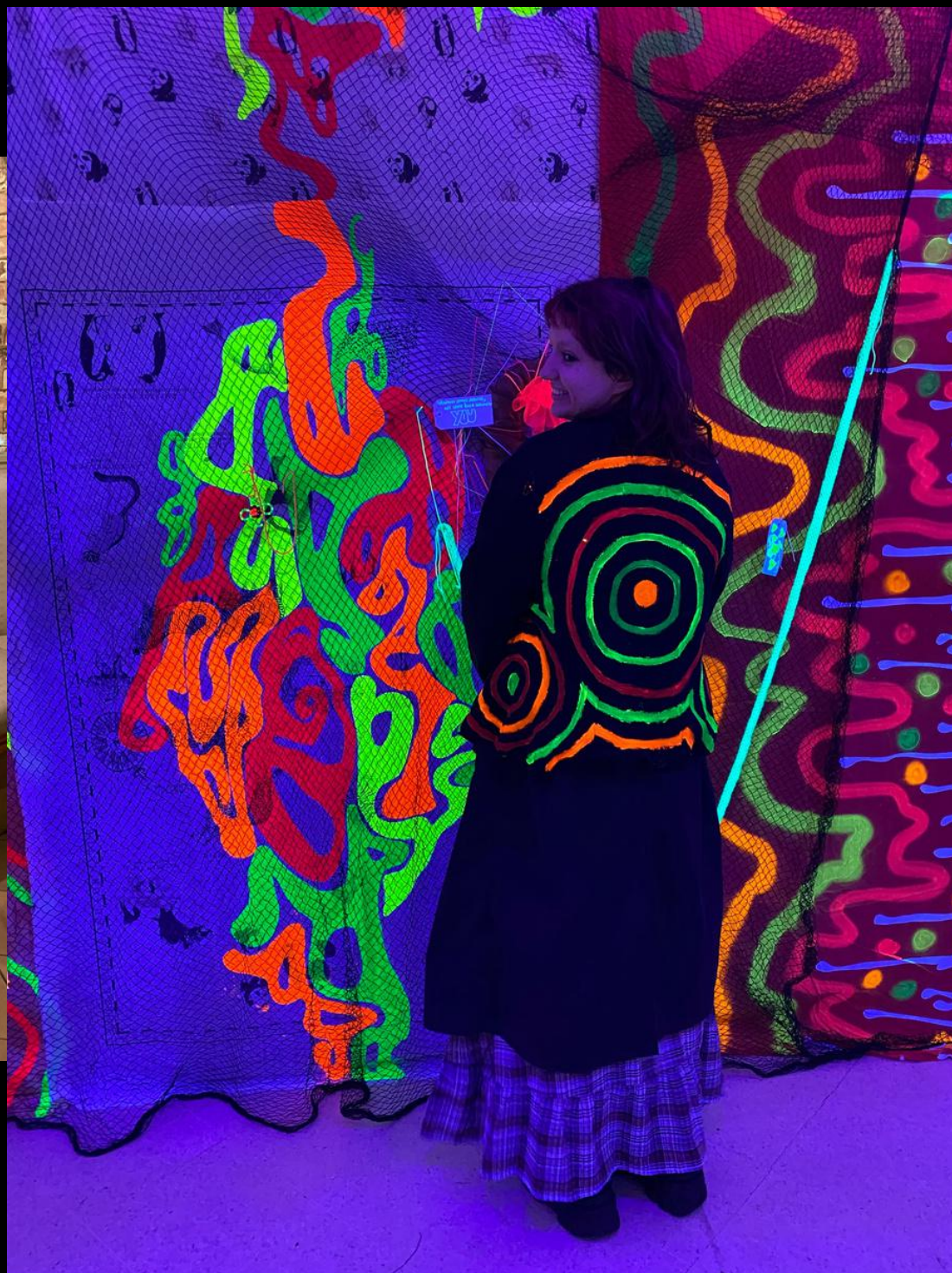


There was a separate 'making space' with tables and chairs and lots of interesting materials.

Lou and Oly, plus several volunteers, were there to chat and to support and facilitate making.

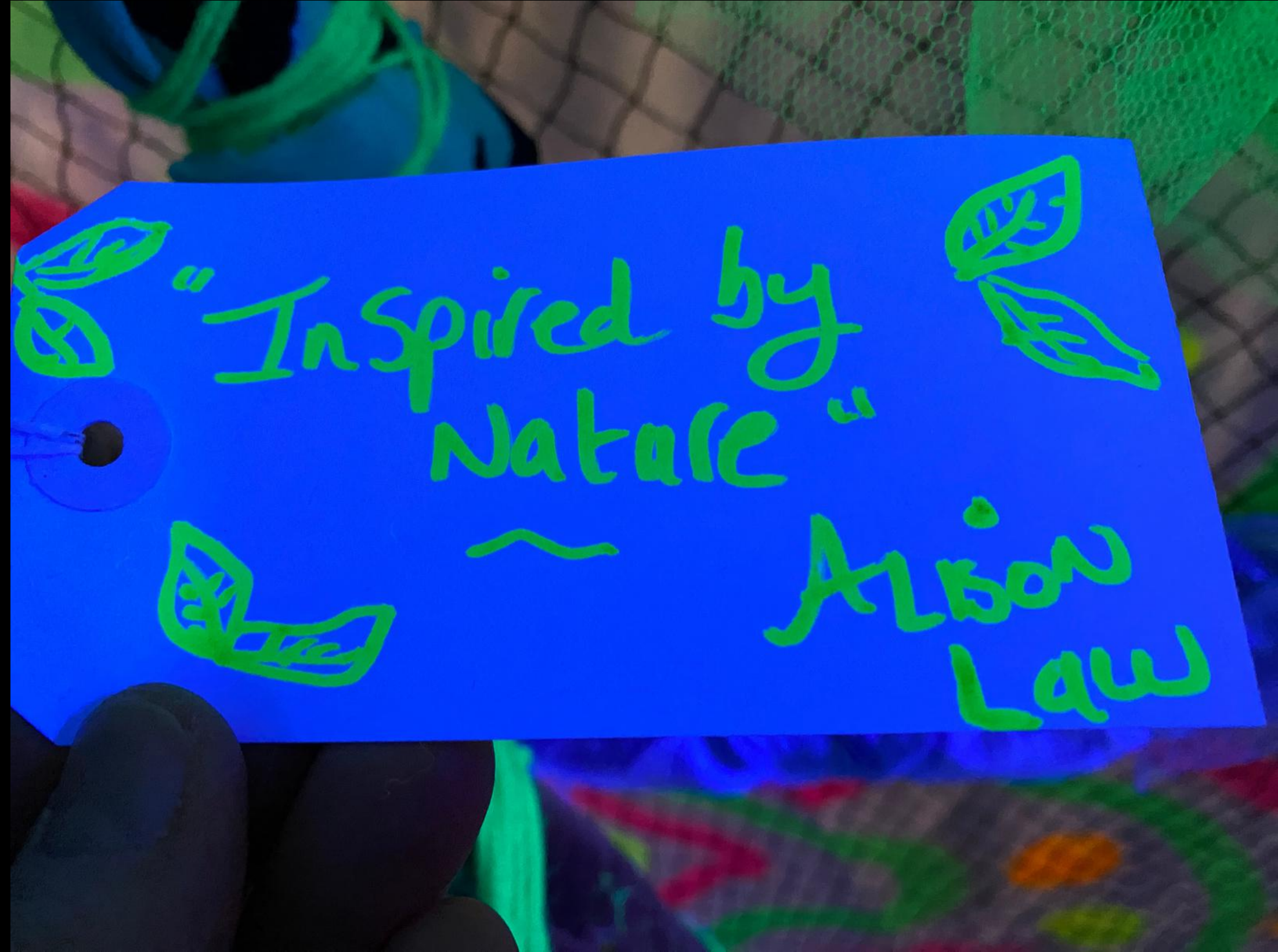
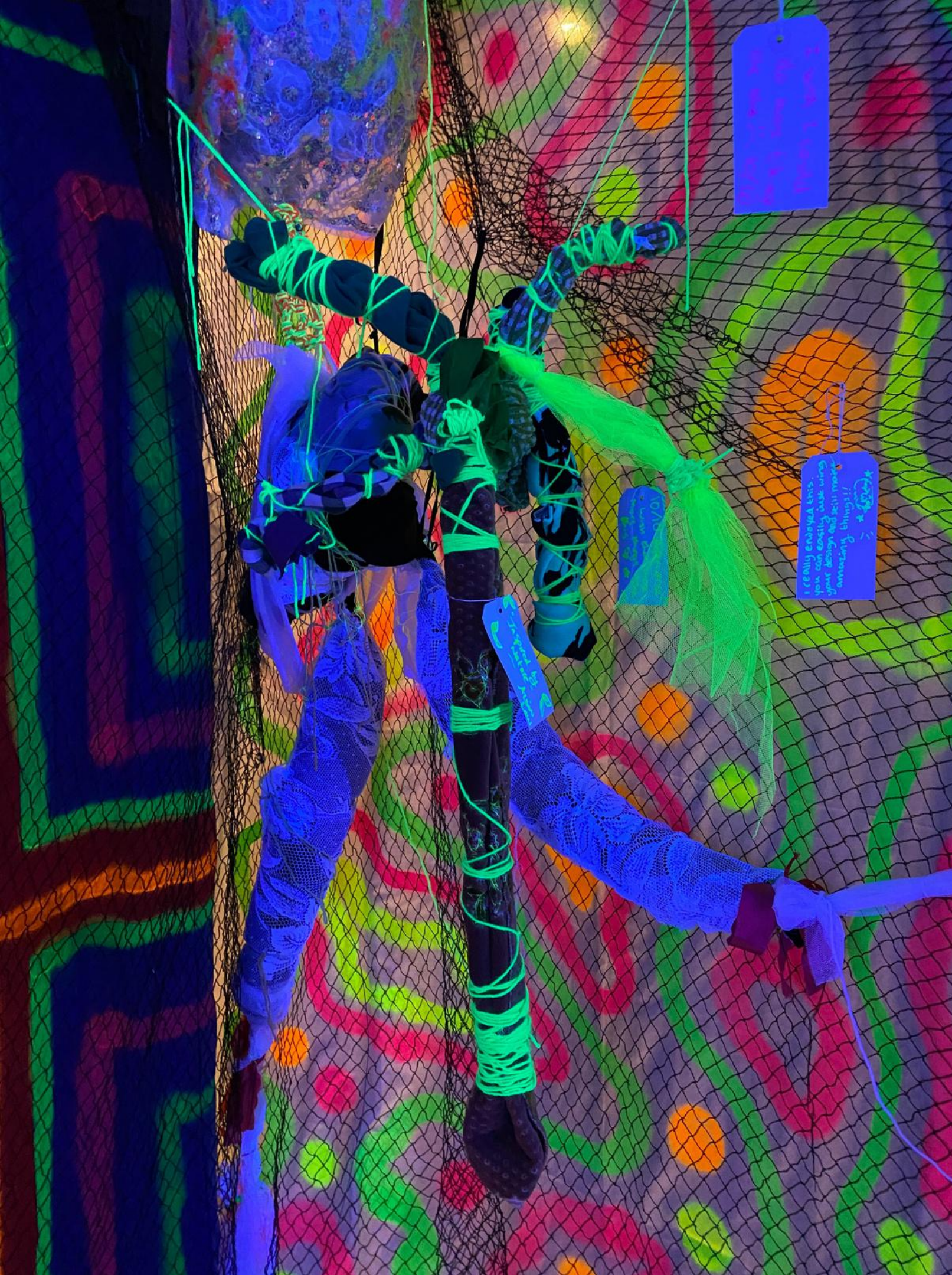








Participants made quirky sculptures using unsaleable second-hand clothing and items donated by local charity shops, glow-in-the-dark yarn and threads and lots of imagination!



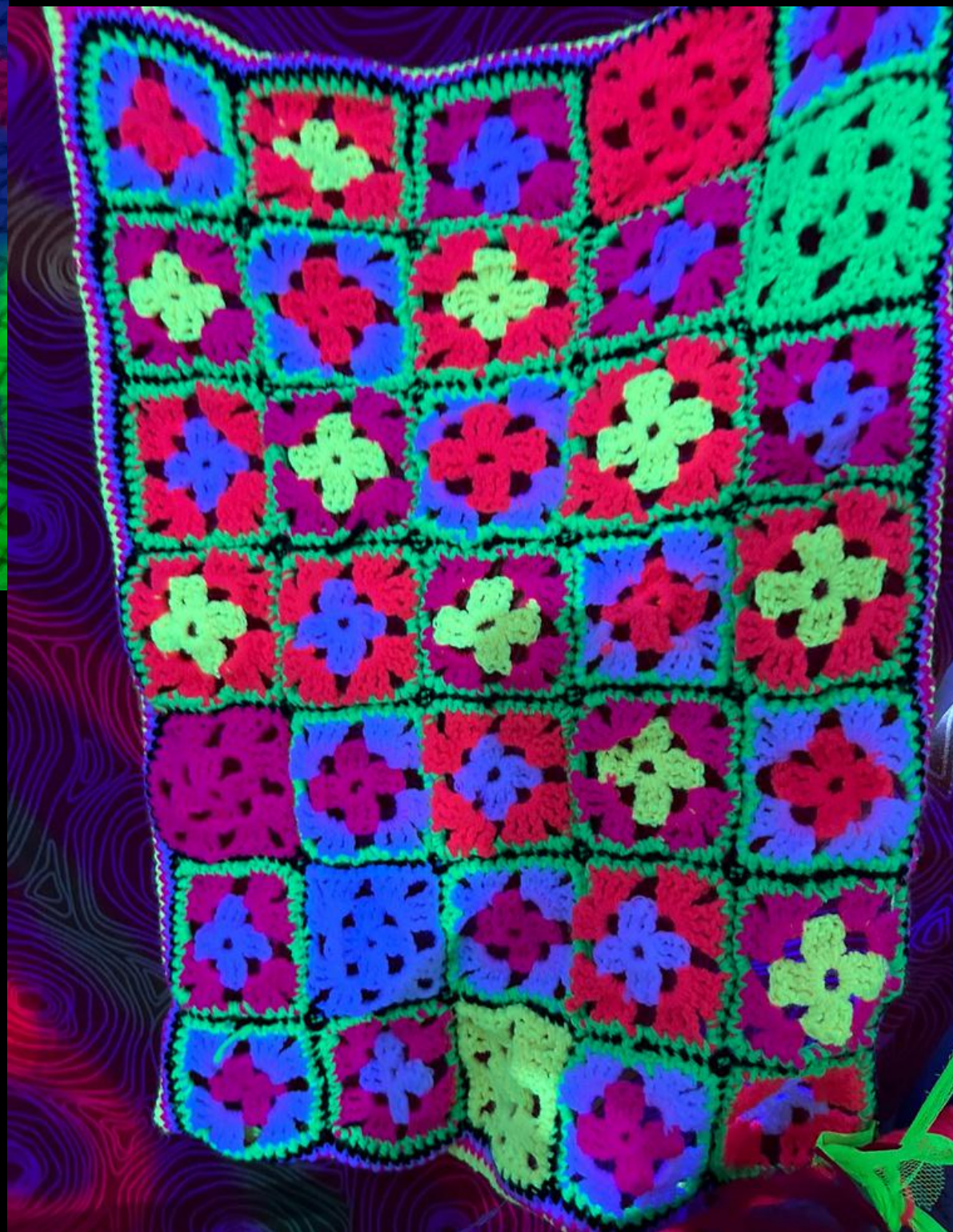
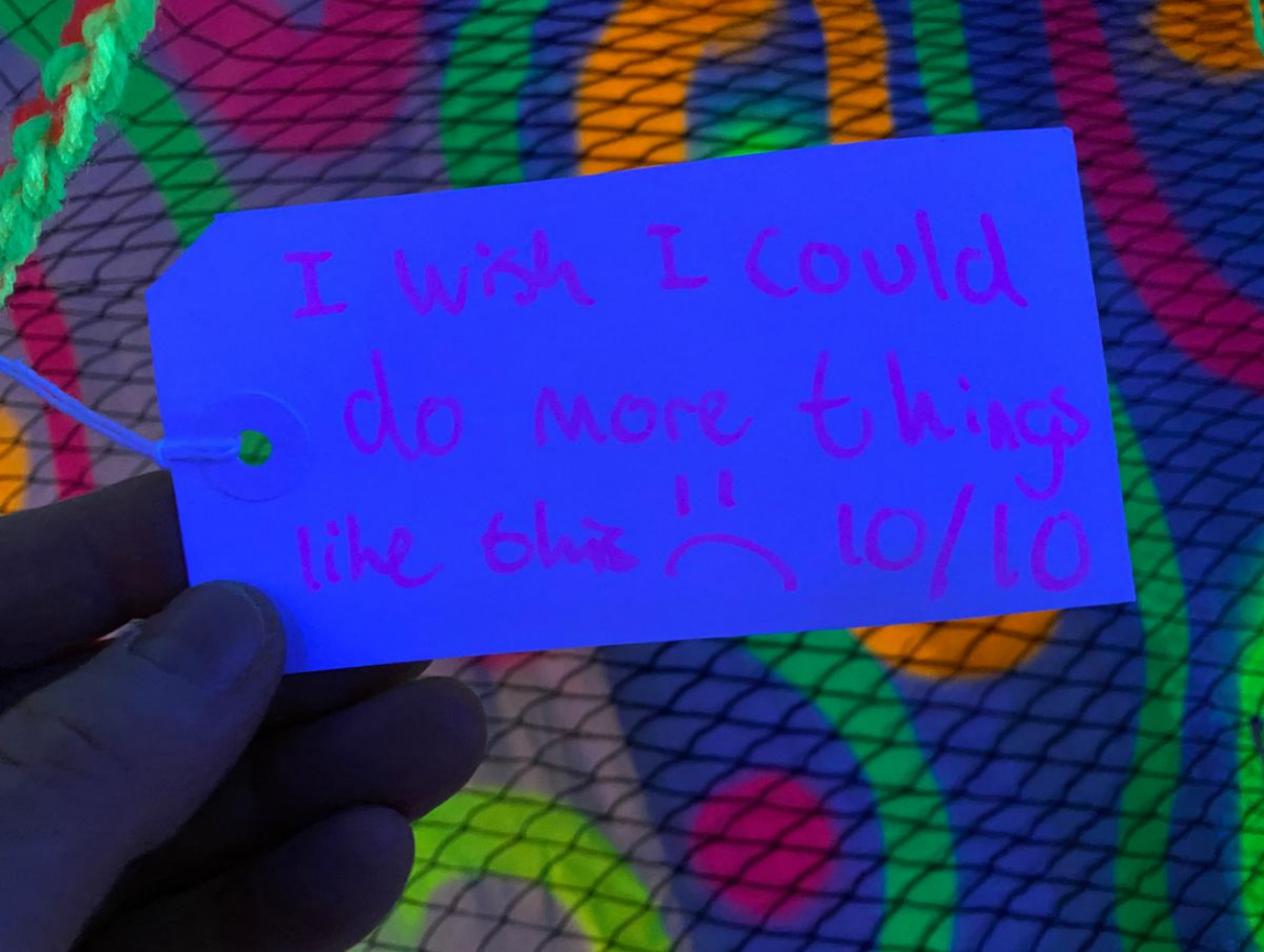


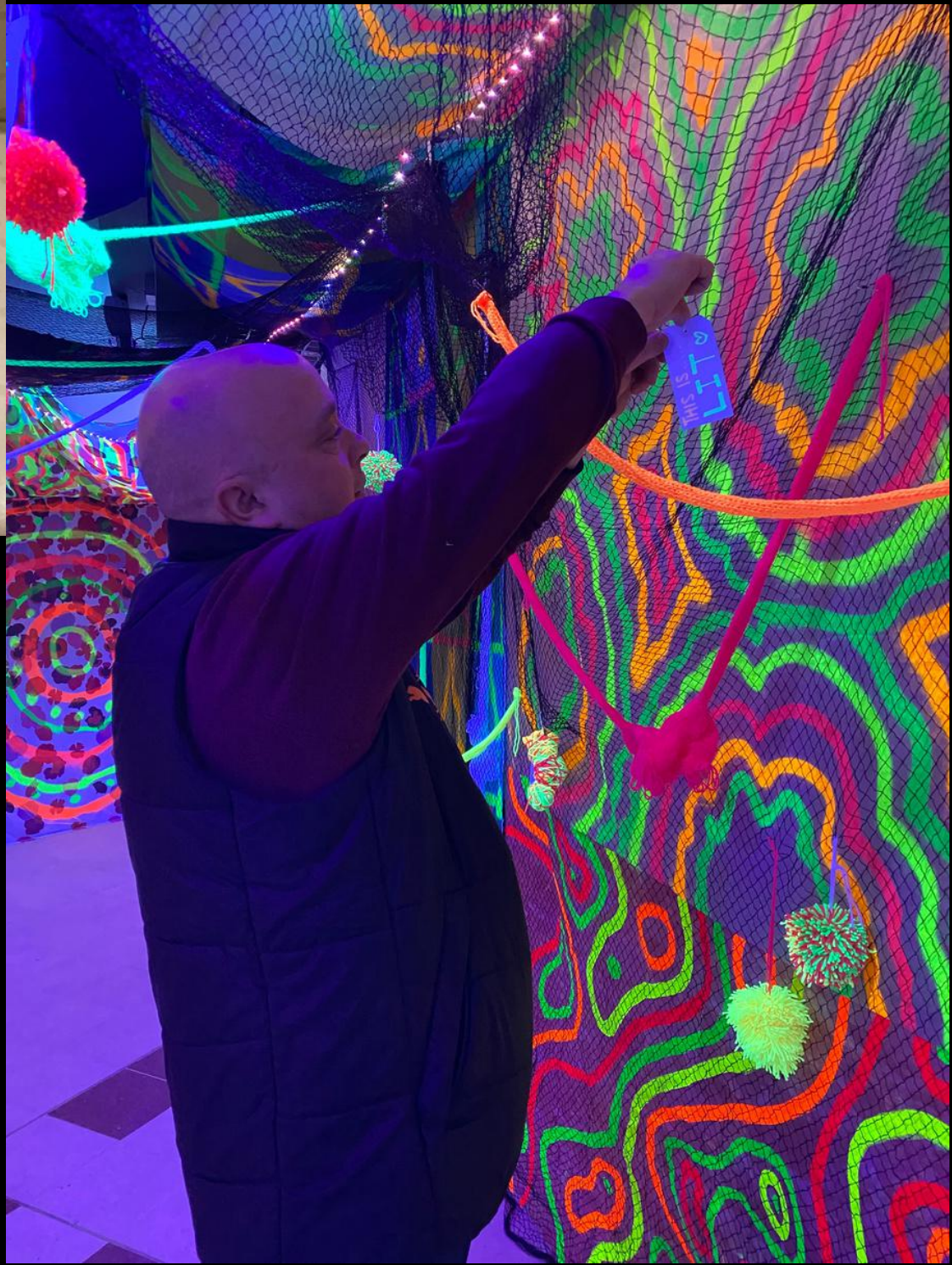
On the first day, several community and educational groups were invited for bespoke sessions:

- Behind the Smile, a local mental health and suicide support charity
- two groups from the local FE college, Heart of Worcester
- a group of students and staff from the University of Worcester

A number of these visitors came back again with friends and families.







The space was then open to the public for
drop-in making and conversation
from Saturday 10th - Tuesday 13th Feb
from 10am - 4pm.





It was wonderful to see so many visitors
becoming absorbed in making
and to see lots of smiles!

Many people stayed for hours.

Many came back another day, or several
times, bringing friends and family.



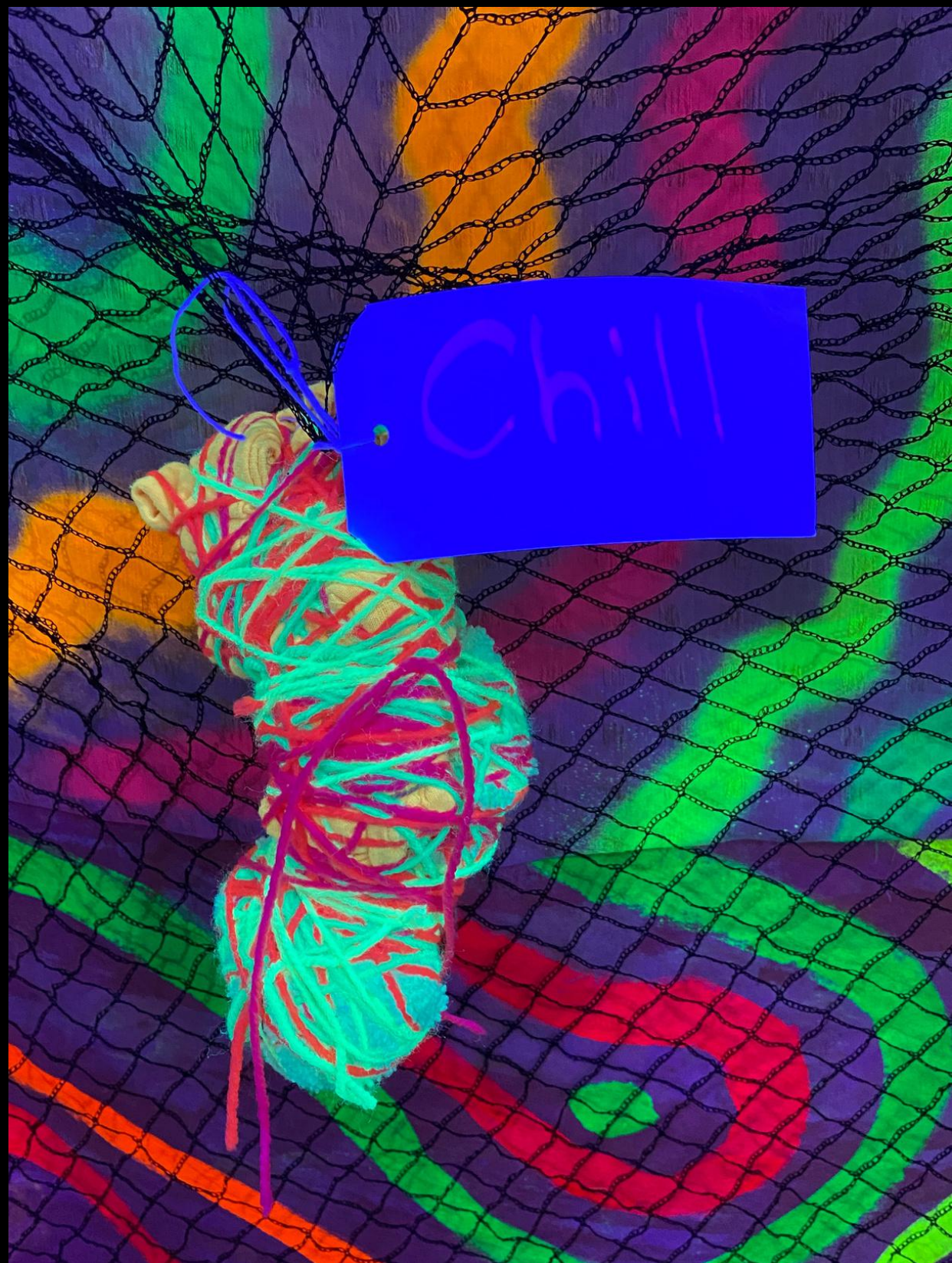
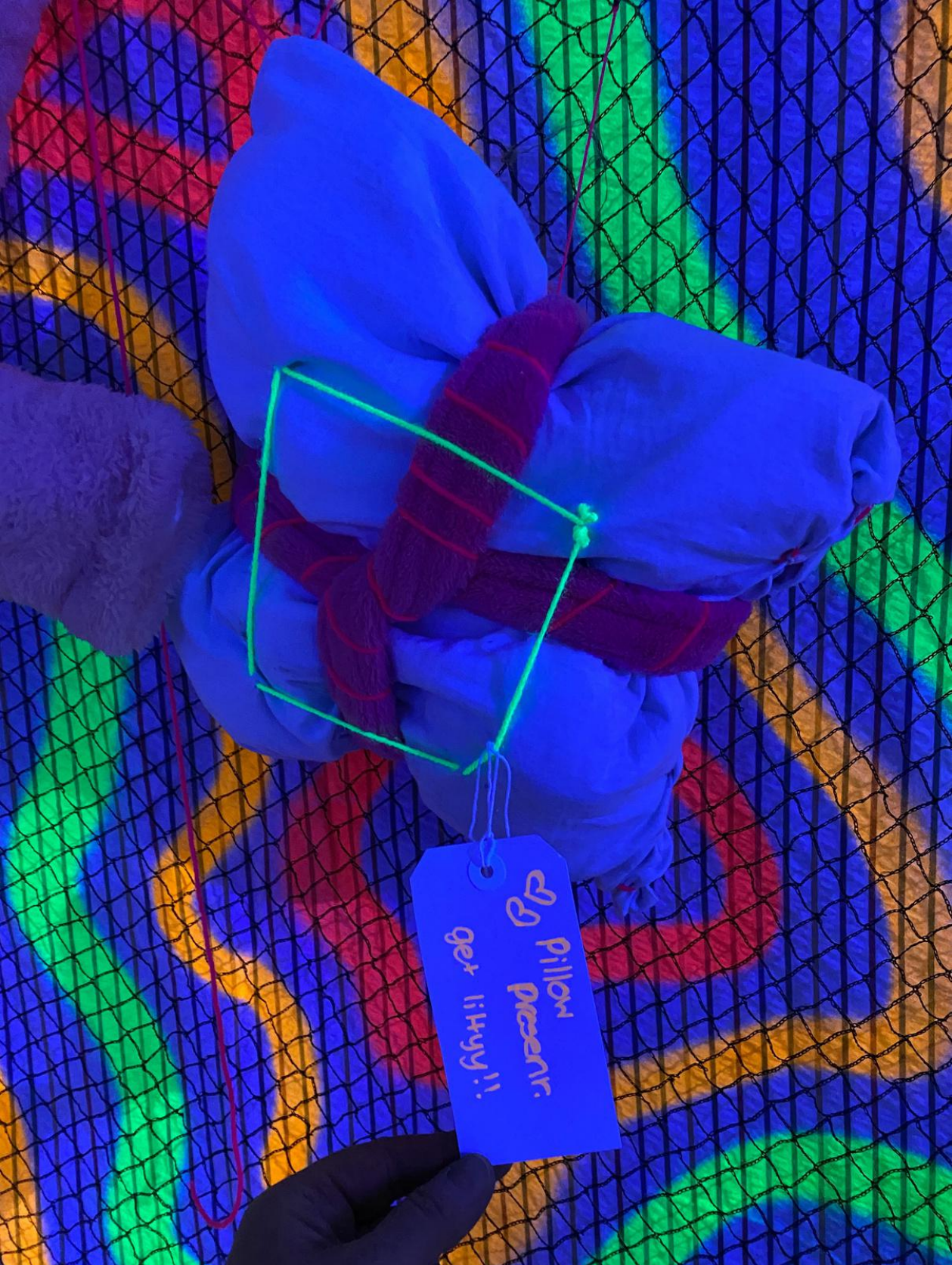








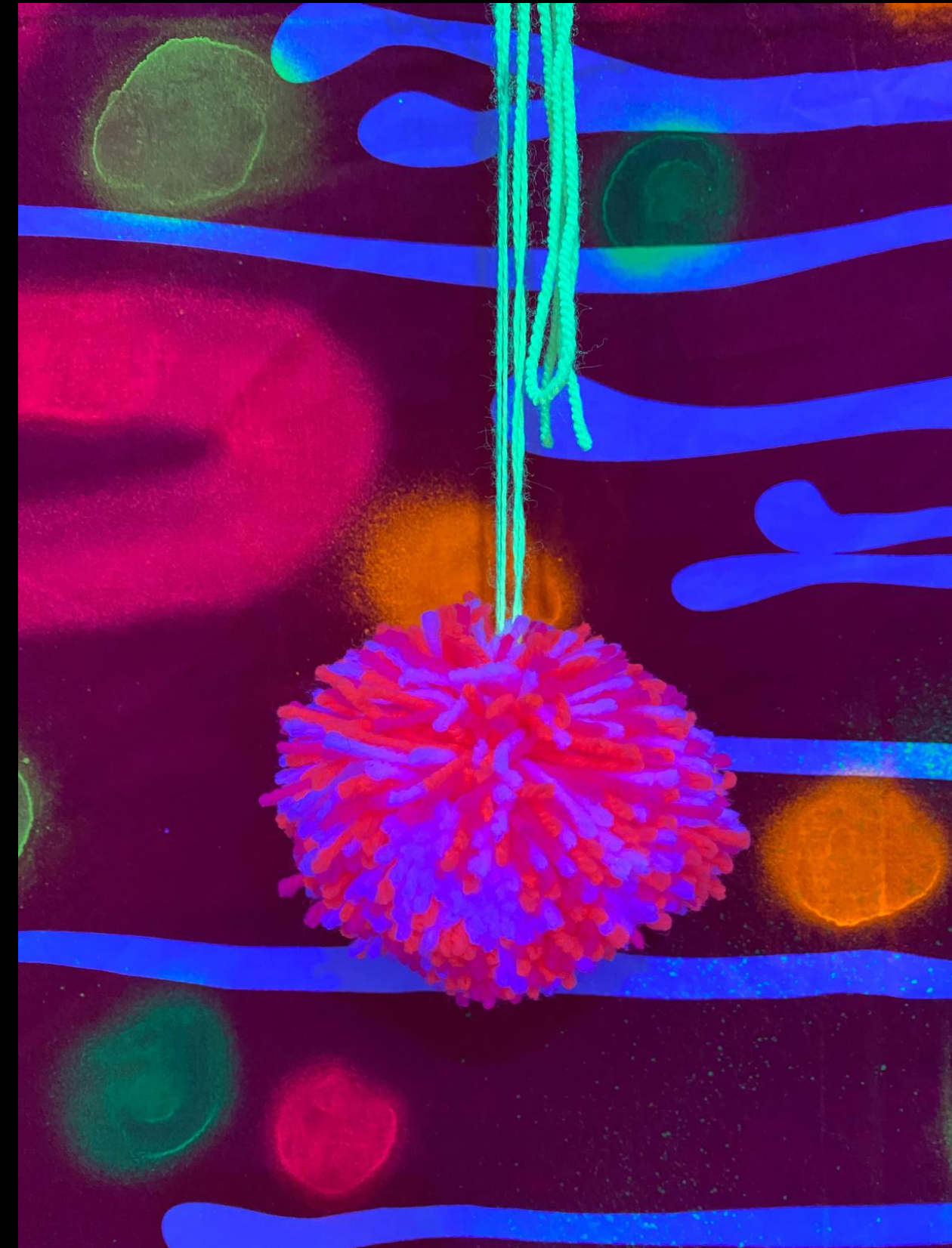
And with the addition of each quirky and idiosyncratic sculpture, the installation kept growing!







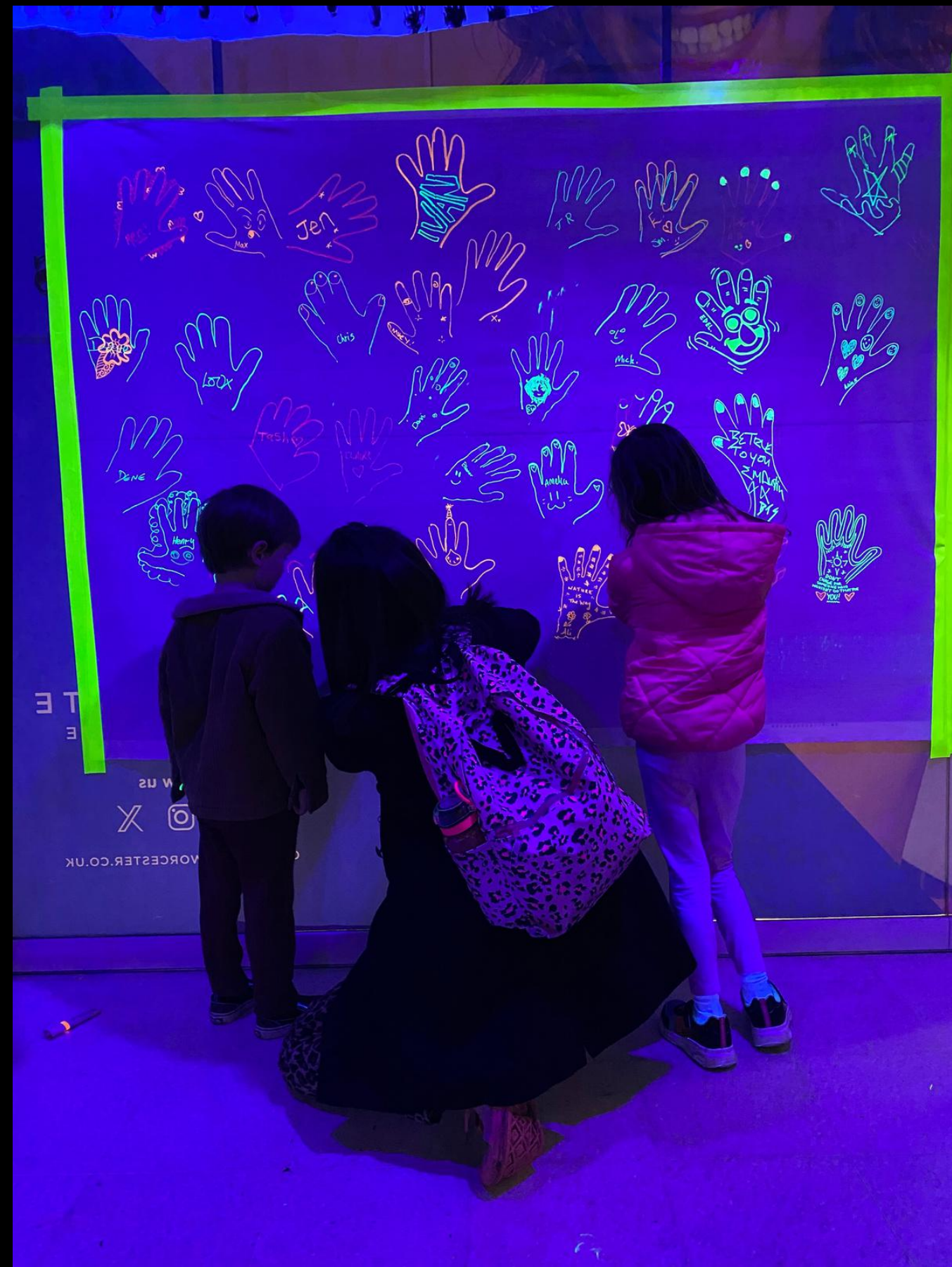
And some people made pompoms with
glow-in-the-dark yarn!



Visitors were also invited to add to the installation by drawing round their hand, using glow-in-the dark pens, on a large wall of cloth.







They could also write their thoughts on a white luggage label, with glow-in-the-dark pens, and tie that to the installation too.

Be Kind!

from Elizabeth.

♡! ☺

Be Kind!

from Elizabeth.

♡! ☺

Be Kind!

from Elizabeth.

♡! ☺

I am

a

BE
KIND

bed making
off out of
nothing!

[illegible]

Elizabeth
 Betsey is here
 She is my friend
 All
 Love

Elizabeth
 Betsey is here
 She is my friend
 All
 Love

Elizabeth
 Betsey is here
 She is my friend
 All
 Love

He is here
My friend
x x x

x x x

x x x

x x x

David Bowie
Old Grey Whistle
Test. 1970's vibe

the
world
should
grow
freely

David Bowie
Old Grey Whistle
Test. 1970's vibe

the
world
should
grow
freely

Many people chose to make their mark by writing their name on a label; others wrote about what they'd made; some wrote messages about their experience inside the installation; some messages were poignant, some were funny, some were motivational.

BE 
KIND

Smile
more
Love
Lila

Happy 

NOT ALL BALLERINAS
HAVE TO BE PRETTY

J.

Don't keep it locked in.
Say what you want to say
Do what you want to do

-Carmine

It was as if it became a virtual conversation;
visitors read what others before them had
written and often responded.

You Are the Light of my Life
baby

I Love You So much XXX

Happy Valentines    

Make a Wish
for the Fish

for

for

Chill

Exciting
display

SAVE THE
TURTLES

-SKSKSK

You will
be OK!
☸

Wrong
Knitting
cls

"It is truly magical
how the everyday
can become art"

Great Space
& Some Calm
Enjoy
Lip
Lip
Lip

Breaking the rules
of crochet
& Creating
Chaos

SHE LOVED
MAKING THIS
WREATH

♡ * @ * ♡ * @
Calm Zone
♡ * @ ♡ * ♡

Pretty
Lights
Excellent Sensory
Experience

* ☺ *

I Like it. from
Isabelle

These are cool
colours and creations
Oliver

A awesome
idea!
Daughter loved
it.

The space was constantly changing,
becoming more fabulous
and surreal every day!







Breaking the rules
of fashion & creating new ones

You will
be OK

Chlorine
facemask

Wash
your face

Wash
your face

Wash
your face

Wash
your face

Wash
your face

Wash
your face

Wash
your face

Wash
your face

Wash
your face

Wash
your face

Every addition changed the space in some way; the weight of some of the sculptures changed it physically and everything changed it aesthetically.



It truly was an astonishing
glowing and growing community project!





During the Light Nights themselves, on Wednesday 14th and Thursday 15th February, *Glowing and Growing* was open to the public from 6-9pm.


It was too busy to offer making, but visitors were still invited to add to the installation by writing a label or drawing round their hand.

Both nights the queues were ridiculous!



Severn Arts

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For more information visit: www.severnarts.org.uk

Severn Arts logo and social media icons: @severnarts

Logos for Arts Council, Worcester City Council, and UK Government.

TOYTOWN

















Baker & Bliss



Baker & Bliss – how it all started:
Oly and Lou recognised that the different
theories they're researching - queering
and subverting the expectations of work
using textiles - actually had many
similarities, and that they were connected
through play and rule breaking.

Baker & Bliss,
Collaborative and
critical play for
permission to play
at The Holburne Open,
March 2022



As Baker & Bliss, they successfully trialled
their first collaborative, participatory project,
permission to play, during **seam** collective's
month-long research residency,
A Visible THREAD, in March 2022
for The Holburne Open,
at The Edge Gallery, University of Bath.
It was sponsored by
The Holburne Museum, Bath.

You are warmly invited to join us by giving yourself

permission to play

modify **rip** **imagine** weave **unravel** alter **stitch** **corrupt**

embellish **knit** **twist** **tear** cut **graft** **queer** gouge

unpick **reimagine** **subvert** plait wrap

and most importantly.... **play**

Both artists were also challenging themselves about sustainability in their art practices and were keen to highlight the shocking statistics of textile waste.

In the UK alone, last year, 360,000 tonnes of textile waste was dumped or incinerated. More was exported elsewhere in the world.

Baker & Bliss,
permission to play,
growing, participatory
installation &
second hand materials
at The Holburne Open,
March 2022



So... visitors were invited to give themselves *permission to play* by making small sculptural objects with a selection of second hand clothing and other unsaleable items from local charity shops. They then added these queer and subversive forms to a growing installation.







As a result of this trial, in May 2022, they were invited to facilitate a version of *permission to play* for a queer, celebratory Museum at Night event at Bristol Museum, which ran alongside *Grayson Perry's Art Club* exhibition.

They adapted the concept successfully for one night only, taking into account the installation in a listed building and to suit a range of very different audiences. Maybe unsurprisingly, it was a fabulous, buzzing and exuberant evening!





They were also asked to adapt the concept further and delivered a *permission to play* workshop for a day at Strode College, in Somerset, working with about 50 Post-16 art students working at Level 2 & Level 3.



This was very well-received by the students
(and staff!) with high levels of enthusiasm and
engagement.

Baker & Bliss first devised *Glowing and Growing* for Severn Arts' Light Night. They consider it to be part of the ongoing research and development of the ideas behind *permission to play*.

They are confident that the idea will continue to grow and change - sometimes glowing, and sometimes, maybe not.

Lou Baker, Bristol

sculpture, installation, performance, social engagement

www.loubakerartist.co.uk Instagram: [@loubakerartist](https://www.instagram.com/loubakerartist)

2024 Glowing and Growing, Worcester Light Night, with Oly Bliss, Feb 2024

2023/24 [Dreamtime Fellowship, Spike Island, Bristol](#), sponsored by Luke Jerram

2023 [Social Scaffolding](#), Arts Council Project funding for a 6-venue exhibition tour

2023/24 [A Visible THREAD](#), with [seam collective](#), Arts Council Project funding for a 4-venue exhibition tour

2023 [LifeBlood](#), at Wells Art Contemporary, Wells Cathedral

2022 [New Contemporaries 2022](#)

2022-23 [Emerge Graduate residency at Bath Spa University](#)

2022 [The Holburne Open](#), a month's research residency with [seam](#) collective

2021 MA Fine Art, Bath Spa University, Distinction

2021 [The Harbutt Fund, Bath Spa University](#), with The Art Cohort for [Social Knitwork](#)

2021 [Real Space](#) a month's research residency at Bath Spa University

2015-16 [Embroiderers' Guild Scholarship \(over 30\)](#)

2015 BA Drawing and Applied Arts, University of the West of England, UWE, Bristol, First Class

Lou Baker

Parts of me, 2021,
knitting, PVC, stitch,
steel, concrete, lead,
the artist's sandals,
final exhibition for
MA in Fine Art at
Bath Spa Uni, Sept.



Lou Baker

Red is the colour of...
2019-21,
hand knitted wool, at
New Contemporaries
2022.

Image: New
Contemporaries



Lou Baker

Shapeshifting, 2024,
glow-in-the-dark wearable
knitted sculpture, worn
inside a glowing den made
with painted domestic
textiles, used clothing and
knitted sculptures,
performance still



Oly Bliss, Worcester

2D, sculpture, installation, social engagement

www.olybliss.com Instagram: [@olybliss](https://www.instagram.com/olybliss)

2024 Glowing and Growing, Worcester Light Night, with Lou Baker, Feb.

2023/24 [A Visible THREAD](#), with **seam** collective, ACE Project funding for a 4-venue tour

2024, History In the Making, Arts Council funded co-created exhibition & book launch The Hive/
Sugar Daddy's Café/ Worcester Cathedral, Worcester, March,

2023 Presentation for Artist Masterclass, Stitch Department, Isle of Wight, July

2023 Presentation at Watermark, Worcester Museum and Gallery, April

2023 #Softlads exhibition, Stitch Department, Isle of Wight, 12 July- 31 August

2023 Prize winner for Hand & Lock Fine Art Textiles Award

2022 #Softlads, exhibition & presentation, The Hive, Shrewsbury, June

2022 [The Holburne Open](#), a month's research residency with **seam** collective

2022 #Softlads Book launch & presentation, Henry Sandon Hall, 29 January

2021 #Softlads, exhibition, Shout Festival, STRYX Gallery, Birmingham, November

2011/13 MA Arts Management, Policy and Practice, University of Manchester

2004/07, BA (Hons) Fine Art: Painting, Manchester Metropolitan University

Oly Bliss

Virahanka's Boutique, 2023,
machine stitch, prize winning
submission for Hand and Lock
Prize for Fine Art Textiles
Image copy righted to Hand
and Lock Prize for Embroidery





Community Commission,
Liverpool Pride with Alternative
Fashion Festival for the Pride March



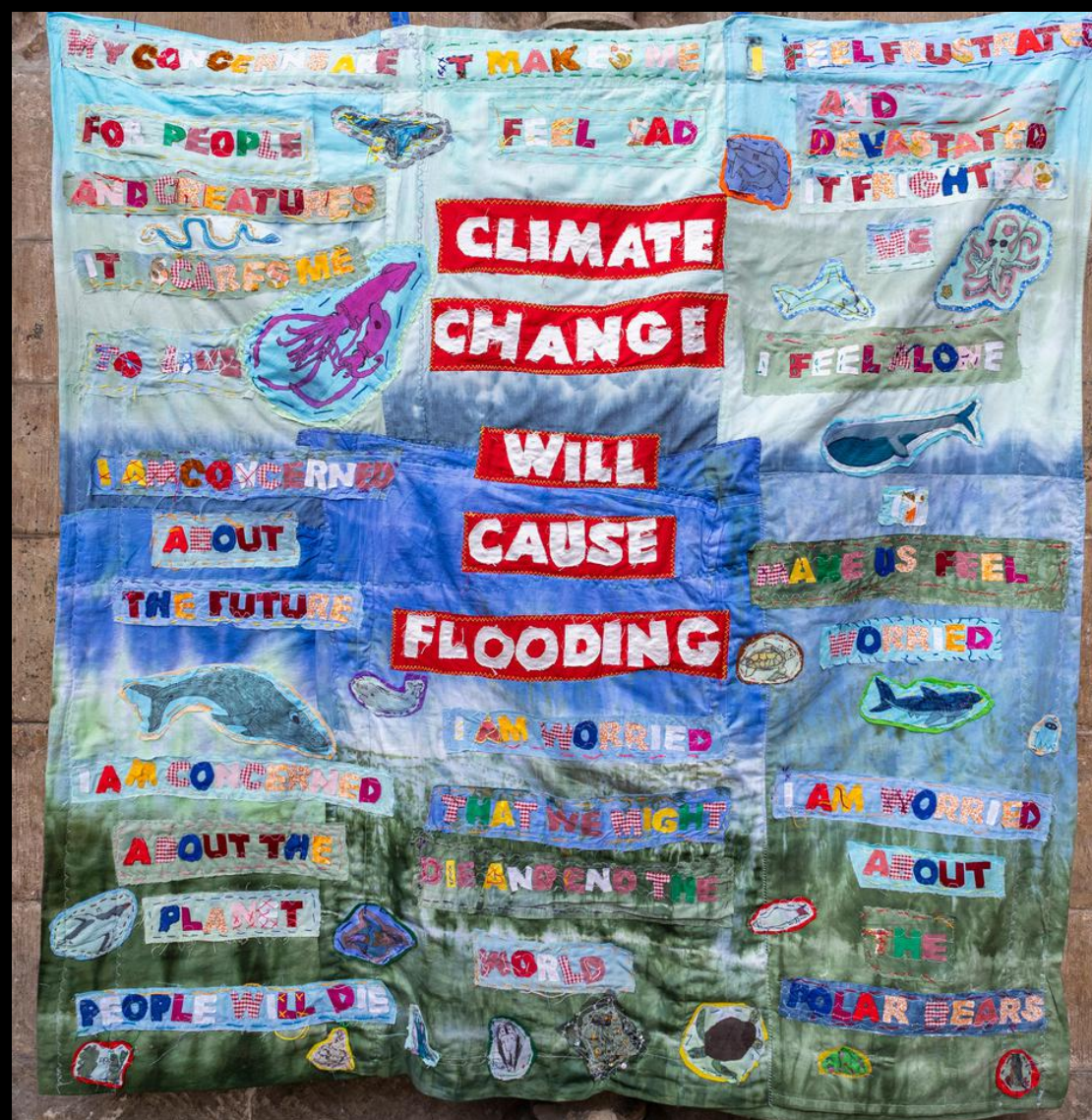
Textile Artist
Protest Art
Workshop



Community Commission,
Manchester Pride with Lesbian
Immigration Support Group



Oly Bliss
Same Sex Marriage Quilt workshop,
FACT, Homotopia Festival



Working with two schools in Worcester to produce protest banners about how they feel affected by the impact of flooding

Only Bliss

Watermark Showcase, Courtesy Meadow Arts
Photo by Tegan Kimberly



Art Week with Chawson First School

Oly Bliss

For more information and
to discuss commissions,
please contact
Lou Baker
loubakerartist@gmail.com
or
Oly Bliss
o.bliss@ymail.com

