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bradford

teesside

blackpool



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Stockton - On - Tees

Green Dragon Yard, Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1AT
The Georgian
Curated By Boo 13 06 25
Theatre

Bootleg Social 19 06 25
Blackpool 30 Topping St, Blackpool FY1 3AQ
Curated By Mia Lily

Bradford
The
Underground 20 06 25
Curated By Zmaraks 9 Duke Street, Bradford BD1 3QR



June - 2025

Commissioned by Relentless Energy, the Local event series took Guernsey-born DJ, producer and all-round sweetheart Mura Masa to three towns and cities in the North of England. The project enlisted three local creatives to curate a night of homegrown talent at grassroots venues, showcasing the spirit and wealth of talent in their towns.

This document serves as a snapshot of those events and the ethos of the project, but also a glimpse into some of the local businesses, artists, venues and creators who are putting their towns and cities on the map. These are people actively contributing to their communities and making boundary-pushing work inspired by their environments. Huge thanks to all involved in this project, and everything you're doing in your local areas.

Never stop.





The idea for this project and the ethos surrounding it emerged as the answer to a very simple and blunt question: How do we make things happen for under-appreciated artists in a way that supports them? Or put more simply: how do we get people paid?

These are seemingly complex questions without obvious answers. Political and economic questions that elude helpful action in place of complex dialogues about privilege, the UK government, council funding, the nature of our bigger cities. Ad nauseam.

However, if my experience playing these shows, working with these curators and talking to the people of these places is to be trusted then the solution becomes obvious and beautiful; one only needs to give people a chance, to give them a platform, to give them an opportunity, and perhaps most importantly to pay them for their wonderful work, and their brilliance will do the rest.

For a quick overview, we threw parties in three under-appreciated cities in the north of Britain, with huge funding and support from Relentless. We chose three key curators whose work we loved, Boo, Mia Lily and ZMARAKS, to put together all local born and bred line-ups. Local poster designers, special local venues. All with a view to spotlighting and paying these contributors for their great work. And I got to come along for the ride, go b2b with the local legends and chat to everybody in the smoking areas. Tickets were £5.

Selfishly, it's been my great pleasure to visit Stockton-on-Tees, Blackpool and Bradford for the very first time and discover something that, shamefully, surprised me. These places felt like home to me. I had been led to believe by those in the capitol that the smaller towns and

cities up north were enigmatic and left behind, an oversight of a neglectful government.

And while this is not untrue with regards to the government's continued underfunding and apparent mistrust for these places, far stronger was the impression left on me that these are normal places. Small places full of the same boredom-fed curiosity and excitement that I loved so much about where I grew up on the Vazon coast road in Guernsey.

If perfection is lots of little things done well, then in these places I found perfect things. Perfect small businesses feeding their niche for their area, perfect people striving to create something that speaks to their experience, perfect venues fighting against odds to bring joy to their communities. Perfect groups of people creating things that could only, and do only, come locally.

My hope for this document is that it serves as both a record of and an extension of this revelation. I had always believed that the greater and more purer works of our culture can always be traced back to the small and unsung places. My guilt is that I didn't know how true this was. I hope you share in this realisation upon seeing the amazing work and lives of our wonderful contributors and curators.

Please enjoy this, let it inspire you to dig around your own surroundings, to lift up those around you. And if you're in a small place anywhere in the world reading this, please know: what you're doing is valid, it has immense worth, and it couldn't come from anywhere else but where you are.

Thank you to everybody who has fingerprints on this project, but especially to Toothgrinder and especially to the locals. Turns out wherever you are is exactly where the best shit is happening.

- Xander (Mura) xxxx

Mura Masa Curators Note

N

teesside



teesside

Between Stockton-on-Tees and Middlesbrough, there are a vast range of galleries, venues and shops of all sizes that offer support to artists in a variety of ways. In Stockton, recording studios such as Green Room and 27D offer affordable music production services to people trying to professionally record their own music in a studio environment. The Auxiliary in Boro is one of the area's most respected galleries, with affordable studio spaces available to rent, as well as an eclectic program of visual arts and free short art courses. An extra shout out to Press On Vinyl, the only local record pressing plant, and Disgraceland, one of the area's most progressive and inclusive DIY music venues and art spaces.

- ■ The Roxy Music & Poster Store Record Shop
 - ■ Regency Records Record Shop
 - ■ The Georgian Theatre Venue
 - ■ Green Room Studios Music Studio
 - ■ 27D Music Productions Studio Music Studio
 - ■ Deep Grain Studios Music Studio
 - ■ Hartburn Recording Studio Music Studio
 - ■ NE Volume Music Bar Venue
 - ■ Tees Valley Music Service Music Centre
 - ■ KU Stockton Venue
 - ■ The Globe Venue
-

- ■ Pineapple Black Art Gallery
- ■ Platform A Gallery Art Gallery
- ■ Disgraceland Venue
- ■ Off The Ground Coffee Cafe
- ■ Cafe Etch Cafe & Venue
- ■ The Middlesbrough Empire Venue
- ■ Press On Vinyl Vinyl Pressing Plant
- ■ Rhythms Music Bar Venue
- ■ The Auxillery Art Space & Studios
- ■ Stockton Globe Theatre Venue









Regency Records

15 Regency West Mall, Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1EF

Despite only opening its doors two years ago, independent record shop Regency Records has quickly become a local cornerstone for music enthusiasts, old and new. Run by Stephen Thompson, an ex-teacher, his stock consists of dance music from his old collection and a wide range of contemporary releases of all genres. He also occasionally hosts small gigs and music recitals in the shop, and his passionate and friendly demeanour provides a welcoming space for all.

Words: Stephen Thompson
@regencyrecordsstockton



In Middlesbrough we have a club called The Empire. I used to go every Friday night religiously to a night called Sugar Shack. Any DJ you could think of played The Empire, people like Carl Cox in the late 90s and 2000s. I saw Justice live there, it was amazing. Now they're doing retro stuff and trying to bring Sugar Shack back, but that's not the scene for me. I want to see the young people out again, with nights made for them.

You don't just want nostalgia nights, we should have new things coming through. Not just people saying it'll never be the same again, you want to recreate that energy so it would be good to see the young people coming through and doing it. I'm in my 40s now though, I've got a family, I've got responsibilities, I've got to justify going out. I DJ so that's how I justify it.

I've released loads of stuff for the last 10 years. I've been on a few labels, like Soma, and been played by DJs like Sasha. A lot of the old guys still play my sort of sound. I've never made a killing out of it. But it's a bit of fun, and it kind of takes your mind off things. I love it. Ableton Live was a game changer for me. It's so quick. That's the thing, give it a little play around and you'll see how user friendly it is.

I do feel like there's a new energy about recently, which is good. Even my own kids - I've got a 17-year-old, and he used to be into grime and people like AJ Tracey, but now he's getting into house music. I was like, that's my thing haha! You don't want to be conformist or regimented with your taste and it's great to see kids are getting into vinyl now. There's been a real resurgence of people wanting to own something tangible. They want to feel something. If you're passionate about something you want to have it in the physical, and that's why I don't sell online, I want people to come into the shop and have that experience. If I wanted to sell online, I'd stay at home, I could easily do that and keep it all in my garage. But I want people to come in and have a little dig and a little chat. It's important.

There used to be another really fantastic record shop called Sound It Out. They even made a documentary about it for the BBC. Tom who ran it was amazing and a good friend. He sadly passed away quite suddenly a couple of years ago and the shop closed as a result of

that which meant there was just a massive void in town. So, I was just waiting for someone to come and fill it, you know? A year later nobody had done anything and I'd always wanted to do it but just thought someone might come along and do it better. I waited and nothing happened so I thought it was my time to give it a go. Gave up the day job!

Every day I'm pinching myself. Don't get me wrong, I'm never going to be Richard Branson, but who'd want to be Richard Branson? As long as I'm keeping the wolf from the door and I'm doing what I love, I'm happy. There's nothing else I want. Making money from music has always been my dream. So, being in bands, being a DJ, producing, none of that feels like it's going to pay the mortgage at my age but there was a chance with this, and it's picking up.

Initially, a lot of the stock was my own stuff and collections, but we've got everything now and it's all mixed up, not ordered by genre. So, you've got D&B alongside techno, dark house and soulful house alongside trance and more poppy stuff. Then there's the newer stuff, like we have the new Cure remix album that came out yesterday, which actually features Mura Masa! Doesn't get any fresher than that. Some of his friends who were down for the show came in to buy some records yesterday, which was nice of them.

“I want to see the young people out again, with nights made for them.”

That's the really cool thing about Stockton, there are always good events on and different people coming through, always something happening. The other week we had three people clearly from out of the area come in. One cockney and one with a Brummie accent and I asked why they were in town. They were a bit cagey at first, like they didn't want to tell me and eventually they said they had a gig at The Globe where I just happened to know that a certain Gary Barlow was playing that night. So, these lads must have been in Gary Barlow's backing band, haha! Like, proper

session musicians, you know. I ended up talking to one of them who said he'd supported Prodigy back in the day. But these people come in! I had Bowling For Soup's manager come in the other day.

“Going out became an opportunity for Instagram. Going out became filming the DJ. But I think people are appreciating it more now. They're realising that's the wrong direction, and they want to live in the moment again.”

Tall Trees in Yarm closed around 10 years ago. It's a housing estate now. They made a little documentary for it after it closed. I mean, I don't think we'll ever have any times like that again. We were queuing around the block at The Empire every Friday night. I used to pay £20 to get into nights and that was big money back then, but you'd make the effort. A big thing was the Criminal Justice Bill, which basically banned raves. It's the only time a style or genre of music was characterised in the law. It was characterised as groups of more than like 10 people listening to repetitive beats, and so club owners saw an opportunity to make money and make legal raves indoors. There was a lot of moral panic around ecstasy, which didn't seem to harm many people.

You get waves in different generations, and I think the younger generation coming through are a little bit more in touch with themselves. I feel like the last generation just went around staring at their phones. Going out became an opportunity for Instagram. Going out became filming the DJ. But I think people are appreciating it more now. They're realising that's the wrong direction, and they want to live in the moment again.



I remember watching Tony Wilson talking about how culture is a double helix, so all the time something's in the ascent whilst something else is in the descent, you know? The same style can go up and down. I get kids coming in here asking for Fleetwood Mac and Queen and Oasis, but then they're also asking for Fontaines D.C., so there's loads of cool stuff happening again. The future looks good.

It's quiet today because there's a massive record fair on in Middlesbrough. Tends to kill my Saturdays whenever there's a fair on. But I'd rather be here and I've got nobody to look after the shop either so I'd always be here. I'm six days a week, but I'm never working Sundays again. I've earned the right not to, I was a teacher for 20-odd years, and I don't miss that one bit!

**BORO IS NOT THE NEW BERLIN
IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE
IT'S JUST BORO
THAT'S ALWAYS
ENOUGH**

IC

Rachel Deakin

Rachel is an artist living and working in Middlesbrough, her projects are inspired by her immediate environment and include photography, moving image, collage, found objects and elements of the everyday.

The following images were taken by Rachel at a series of Monday Night In Middlesbrough events, hosted by the regionally prolific Industrial Coast. The experimental noise label based in the heart of Teesside has been the home to local and international acts, breathing boundary-pushing sounds into the landscape around them.

"An ode to the people and the spaces that shape the scene"

Photos: Rachel Deakin

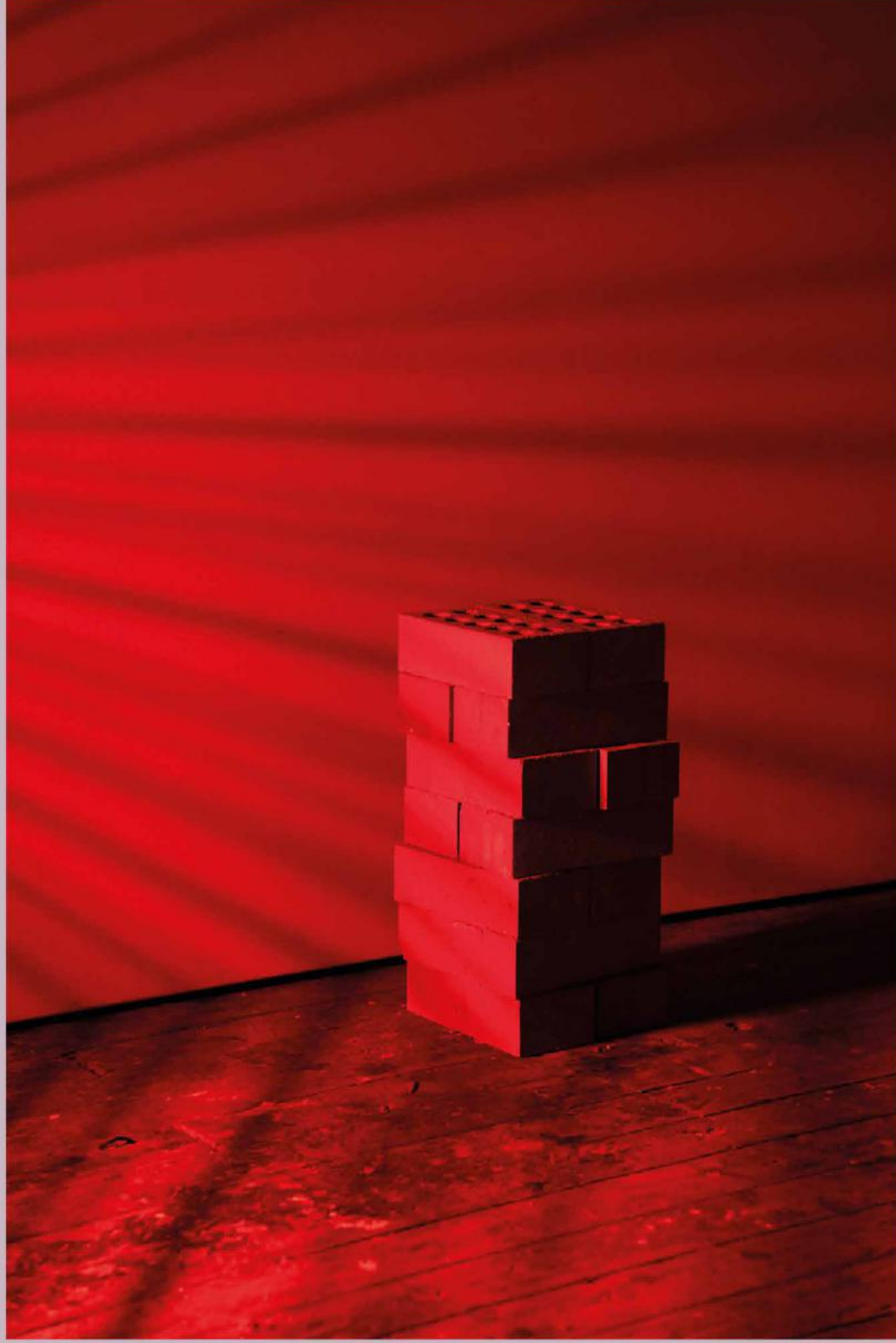
Words: Fiona Cameron

@racheldeakin_

@fiona.cameron.art



INDUSTRIAL COAST











Mondays are dead days. They're the quiet spaces between noise, the spaces that we disrupt and they set the perfect backdrop for our first exhibition.

When we launched an Industrial Coast gallery space, of course it had to start with A Monday Night in Middlesbrough. The programme was born out of necessity; it was a way of making things happen when they otherwise wouldn't.

Rachel Deakin documented our 2023 programme, so of course this body of work became the perfect opening statement. Her work demonstrates an honest perspective, documenting urban landscapes and the interplay between people and spaces.

A lot of the early-day gigs were cast under the glowing red light of The Auxiliary's industrial heaters, the only source of heat and light in the depths of the warehouse. The piercing red glow makes its mark on this series, becoming a recurring motif and visual echo to the artists kicking up the dust and doing it loudly.

Her photographs don't just capture the people at the heart of the programme but they hold a special kinship to the spaces that shape the scene. They are an ode to the venues with scars, the buildings with histories, and those fleeting moments of presence.

They prove that A Monday Night in Middlesbrough is as much about the noise, the artists and the crowd; as it is about the spaces that hold us - the place that holds us.

Her exhibition set the tone for what this space is, and since its launch, the show has moved on to Village Books in Manchester, where we'll enjoy the closing party this Saturday, and will soon travel to North Carolina with independent label Enmossed. The work has taken on a life of its own, much like the programme that inspired it.

A Monday Night in Middlesbrough was never just a gig series. It was (and is) about shifting expectations, building something lasting, and putting Middlesbrough onto the map for sound exploration and experimental art.

It's about giving artists space, not just in London, not just in major cities, but here on our doorstep.

A Monday Night in Middlesbrough wasn't a one-off. It was a starting point.

More soon.



C - Dyer

C-Dyer is a Teesside based multidisciplinary creative, working in both digital and analogue mediums. His practice explores overlooked, neglected and ignored elements of modern-day society. It represents its surfaces, objects and inhabitants through a multidisciplinary approach, aiming to highlight the hypocrisy and beauty of the everyday whilst also exploring how context (both spatial and presentation) affects the viewer's opinions and intentions when viewing.

Photos: C - Dyer

@cal_fw
@fullywaste
c-dyer.co.uk















Philip Meadows

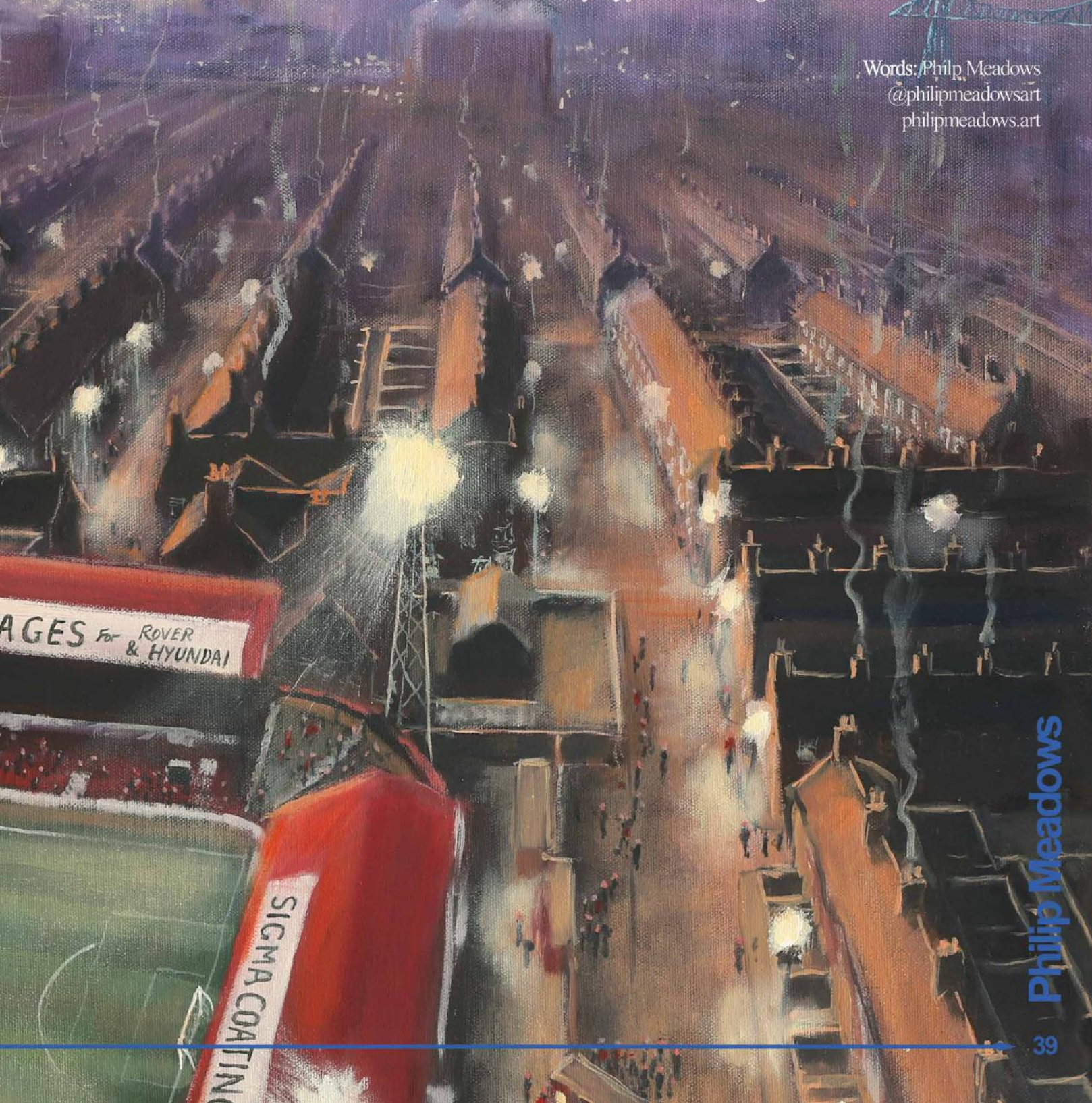


"Teesside when I was growing up was a vibrant place, full of heavy industry. Chemical works, steel plants and blast furnaces were all around, filling the air with noise and pollution but most importantly, providing employment. Boro fans were nicknamed 'Smoggies' because of the smoke and smog. When I was a kid, we'd play hide and seek in the street. On a smoggy night you didn't even need to hide.

My father died when I was seven. Money was tight and I enjoyed life playing with my mates on our council estate. I can't ever remember that life was tough. My days were filled with my mates, roaming the hills, collecting and storing memories of the sights and characters of Teesside.

I went to ICI at 16 and served an apprenticeship. I was always interested in art and in my 20s started attending night school then eventually Sunderland University where I completed a BA Hons in Fine Art. Initially working as a sculptor, I completed many public commissions before taking up a career in teaching. Eventually the urge to paint and make it my day job was too strong. In 2018 I became a full-time artist."

Words: Philip Meadows
@philipmeadowsart
philipmeadows.art







The Georgian Theatre

Green Dragon Yard, Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1AT

Curated By Boo 13.06.25

Stockton-born DJ and producer Boo is the winner of the BBC Radio 1 emerging talent competition and runs her own party series 'Ghet-Tec' across the country. She curated a varied and stacked line-up to set the tone for the series. Hosted in the historic, stunningly restored Georgian Theatre, a not-for-profit independent venue and performance space, Boo and Mura Masa went b2b and brought the entire crowd onto the stage for their set. She enlisted house producer Alousea and local up-and-coming DJ Cousin Dan to play, alongside the experimental DJ and the dark and experimental DJ REES, who runs his own label Magic Ritmo. It was an unforgettable curtain-raiser for all involved.

Poster Design: Polly Byatt
Photography: Will Creswick

MURA MASA
PRESENTS

Stockton
on Tees LOCAL

WITH BOO

Powered by
Relentless

Abusea
Cousin Dan
Rees

13.06.25

THE GEORGIN HEATRE

3A presents
AL Relentless

Mura Masa presents
LOCAL Relentless

Mura Masa presents
LOCAL Relentless

Mura Masa presents
LOCAL Relentless

Mura Masa presents
LOCAL Relentless

Mura Masa presents
LOCAL Relentless



Where were you born and where are you based now?

I was born in Middlesbrough and now situated in Newcastle.

How did you get into music?

I wanted to be a DJ/ producer from the age of 18, I moved to Ibiza and delved into the music scene.

Do you have a particular process to making music?

I don't have a process to making music however my urge to create music usually falls around moon cycles, I channel a lot of emotion/ experiences into my tracks.

What does community mean to you and your music?

I think community is important for the music industry, I like to believe there is room for everyone at the table so it's important to come together as a collective to support/ encourage & inspire each other.

Favourite things to do outside of music?

Alongside music, I'm a sound healer and I also make festival headwear out of earthly materials - I often run my own events bringing the two together around the North East.

Favourite independent shops near where you live?

I live on the coast there's so many gorgeous places to eat & drink, a coffee called Rustic Cup for coffee, Omni Cafe for Asian food and Tynemouth Market on a weekend for street food & the best deserts!

What are some of your favourite books?

I enjoy reading female empowerment books such as Women Who Run With Wolves.

Best way to self-care/unwind?

Best way to unwind is sea dipping I live on the coast so I have a little ritual where I head down to the beach have a sea dip and a coastal walk.



Alousea



Where were you born?

Middlesbrough, born and bred!

When did you start making music?

I started writing music in 2017, but it's always been a huge part of my life

Do you have a particular process to making music?

Ideas stem from anything, recent places, people, animals, sounds, feelings.
Then lots of experimentation until something clicks

Roughly how long does it take for you to finish a track?

Anywhere from 2 hours to 2 weeks. The latter more recently.

How would you describe some of your recent musical output?

I'm working on my first album, so I'd say conceptual and off-kilter

How do you distribute your music?

Digitally through Labelworx, physically through my record label

What is your relationship with social media?

Frustrating, fun, cringe, and sometimes useful

What is your opinion on record labels?

Labels are some of my biggest influences; Bordello A Parigi, Underground Resistance, Minimal Wave. Curation in music is amazing and helps shape scenes. Check out my own, Magic Ritmo.

Who are some of your favourite current underground artists?

Afra, Orpheu The Wizard, Alicia Carrera

Who are some of your dream collaborations?

Musically, it'd have to say John Talabot. From a label side, collaborating with Nosedrip and his Stroom label would be something incredible.

What does community mean to you and your music?

It's the point of everything! Curation of music, labels, club events is all just to share music to those wishing to be a part of something.

What are some of the challenges you face as an artist?

The infamous algorithm!

Favourite things to do outside of music?

Education, football and looking at dogs

Favourite independent shops near where you live?

Long live The Endeavour! Special mention to The Ship Inn for their panto

Are you a reader? If so, what are some of your favourite books?

Extinctions by Michael J. Benton and Brief Answers by Stephen Hawkins

Are you a gamer? If so, what format/console/games?

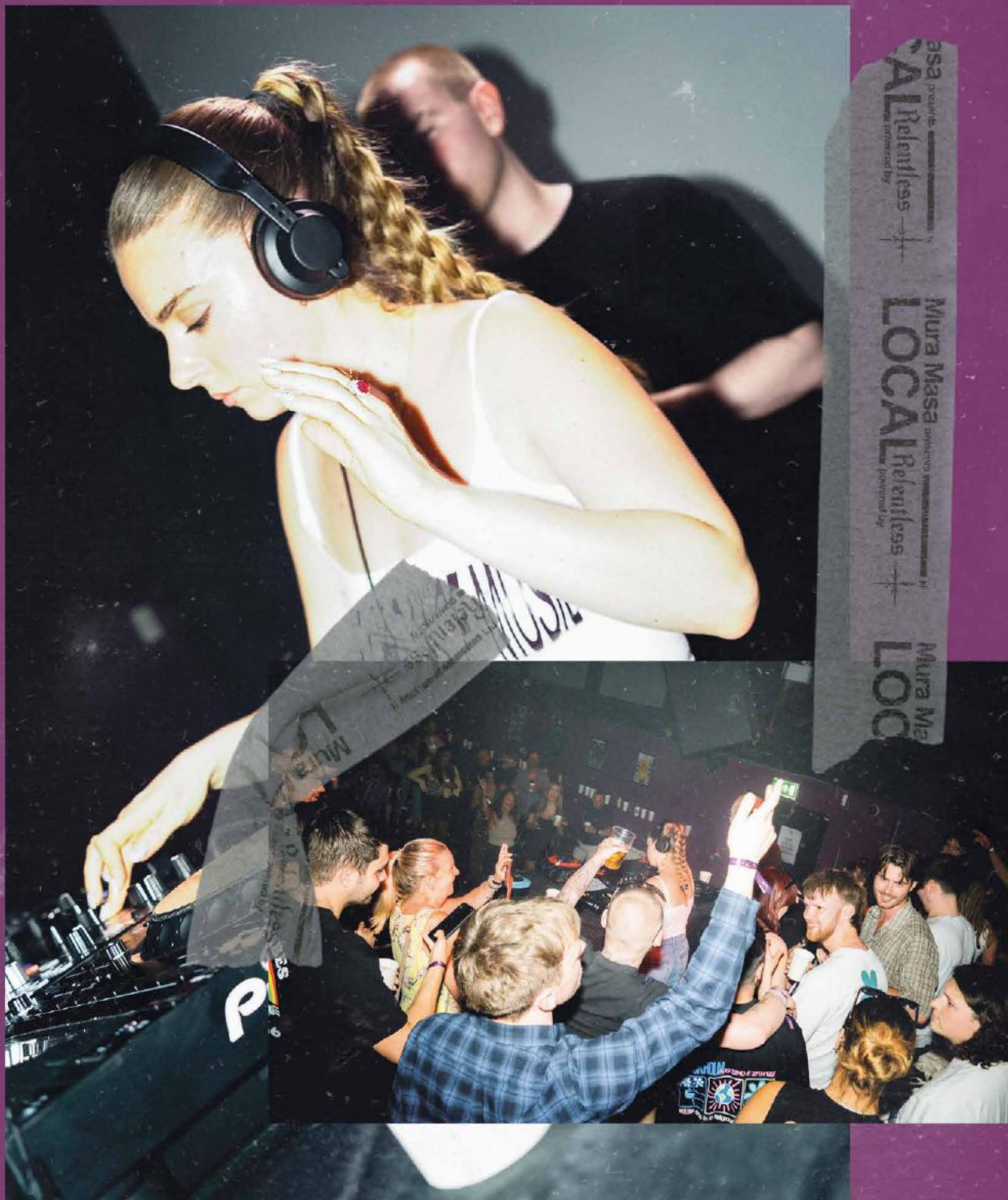
Not since I was younger, but the nostalgia of FIFA 04-16 still hits deep

One object you can't live without?

My coffee machine



REES



asa presents
ALReinless
powered by


Mura Masa presents
LOCALReinless
powered by

Mura Ma
LOC



Mura Masa
LOCAL



A photograph of a group of people, likely a DJ crew, behind a DJ booth. The image is somewhat blurry and has a blue tint. In the foreground, there's a DJ mixer and a white cup. Several people are visible behind the booth, some looking towards the camera and others looking away. A quote is overlaid on the left side of the image.

“Stockton is a small town and all my family’s here, so I’m always going to feel connected to it, but it’s a hard place. I remember driving past the big chemical plant and hearing stories about my dad working there. There’s not a lot here, and there’s a lot of drugs and halfway houses and crime, but it’s also beautiful. There’s a sense of people working together.

- Boo

N

blackpool



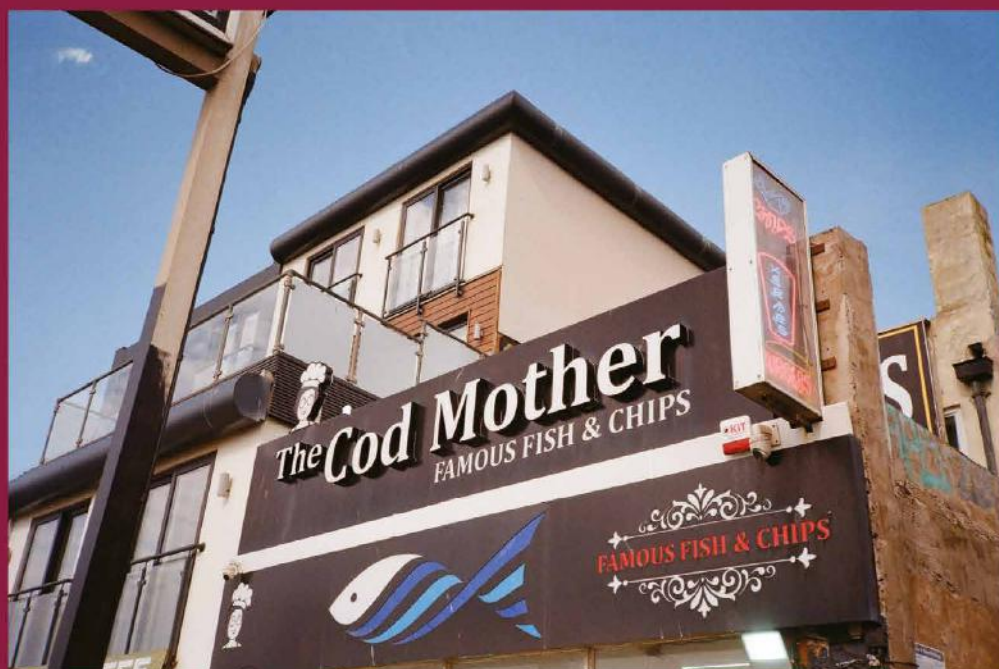
blackpool

Known historically as the home of the Pleasure Beach, Blackpool is the original northern seaside resort. With a diverse contemporary scene as invested in electronic music as they are in heavy metal, Blackpool's underground has something for all music heads. In 2024, the brand new queer multi-arts festival Queer Amusements took place, and you can find free community spaces at Aunty Social and Odie's Pottery. Between Jims Records and Inertial Sounds you have your next DJ set covered, and the beautiful Blackpool Tower still stands in all its glory, just by the pier.

- ■ **Jims Records** Record Shop
- ■ **Inertial Sounds** Record Shop
- ■ **Abingdon Studios** Art Gallery and Studios
- ■ **Grundy Art gallery** Art Gallery
- ■ **Records & Relics** Record Shop
- ■ **House of Wings** Dance School
- ■ **Aunty Social** Community Arts Centre
- ■ **Odies Pottery** Social Club
- ■ **Alan's Albums & Retro** Record Shop
- ■ **Tiny Pug Records** Record Shop
- ■ **Blackpool School of Art** School
- ■ **The Grand Theatre**
- ■ **Thatmusicshop** Record Shop
- ■ **Little Black Pug Bar** Bar/Venue
- ■ **Last Light** Coffee Shop
- ■ **Club Infinity** Club
- ■ **Blackpool Pier** Venue/Statue
- ■ **Dazamakiz** Music Shop
- ■ **Phoenix Vinyl** Record Pressing Plant
- ■ **Stage Box** Music Shop
- ■ **Rock Hard** Recording Studio







Inertial Sounds

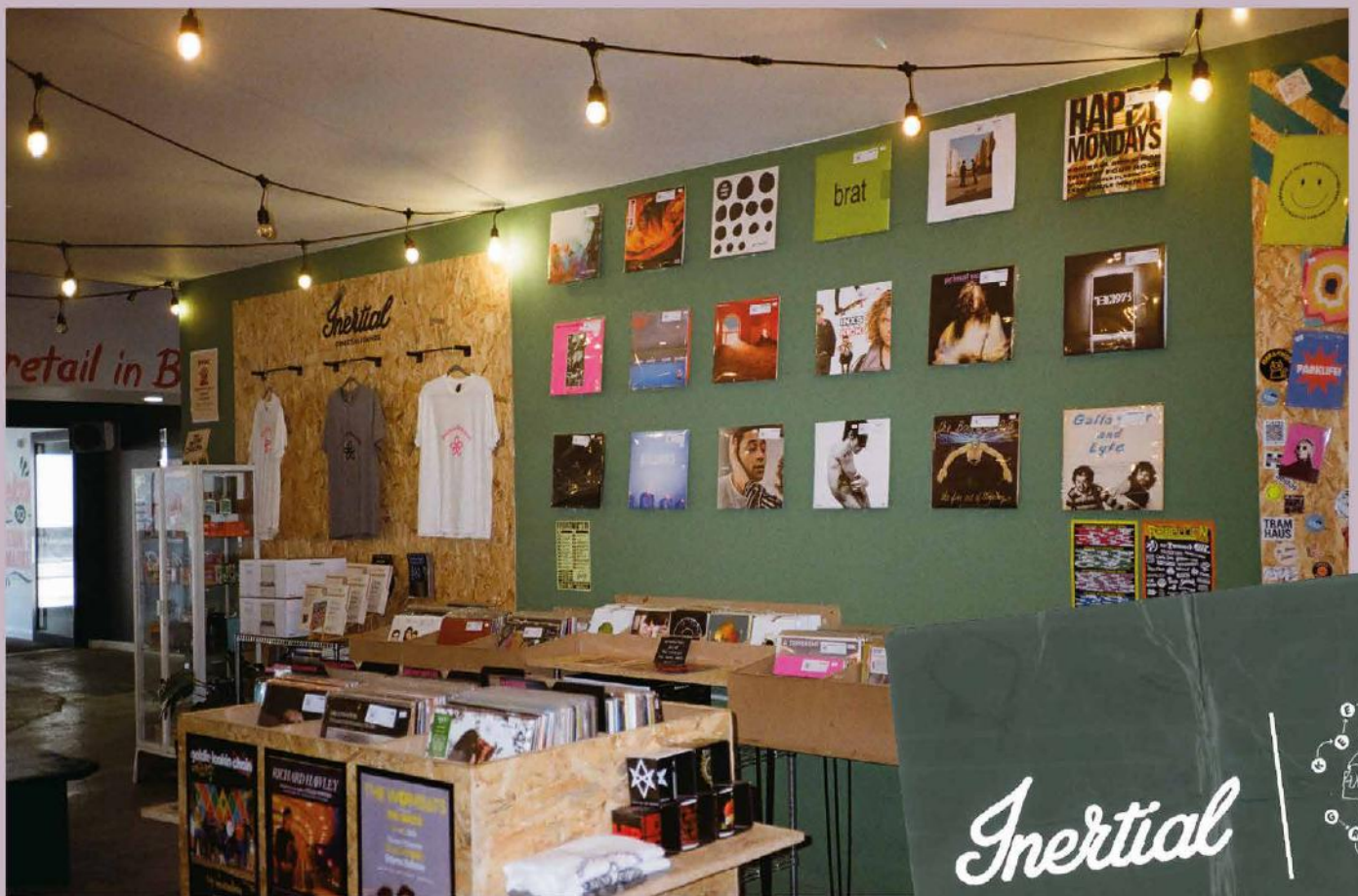
16-20 Abingdon St, Blackpool FY1 1BA

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Troy Bradford had the idea to set up an Instagram account to share his favourite albums and rarest niche records. After generating a following online, he was able to open Inertial Sounds in 2023, and has been supplying the people of Blackpool with new releases and indie essentials ever since.

His aim is to make buying records more accessible to people and curate a welcoming space for both vinyl newcomers and established heads. Troy has helped organise record fairs in the area, and always has a wealth of local artists stocked in the shop.

Words: Troy Bradford
Photos: William Francis Green

@inertialsounds



I've had the shop only two years now. Before that it was just an Instagram account. I'd buy new records and showcase them, just what I was listening to, loads of niche post-punk stuff. I got a bit of a following so decided to open the shop and try to make a business out of it. Only two years though, so still in our infancy. Most businesses close within three years so we'll see how we go!

We're in Abingdon Street Market. It's kind of like Afflecks Palace in Manchester. There's loads of good independent stalls and shops with handmade stuff, so it feels good to be a part of that.

There are five record shops in total but four main ones in the centre. You've got me, Inertial Sounds, and then Jims Vinyl and Alan's Albums on Topping Street, and then you've got Records and Relics round the corner. It's cool because we all do different things, some buy and sell, and some are more into reggae or electronic or classic rock.

We all know each other, it's a super supportive community. It can be a cut-throat industry, there's not a big margin on records and you're always making a gamble when you order something in. If people don't like it, you're just stuck with it. So, we help each other out.

A lot of my stuff is new releases. Independent and non-label releases, local groups. Definitely more on the guitar side of things, but also just things that I like. I think that's important as a record shop. If you don't actually like what you're selling, you're never going to sell it!

I'm Blackpool born and bred. When we were growing up there were a lot of places to go out to. We had the Tower Lounge, Sequins, and Funny Girls, which is one of the most infamous drag nights in the UK, still going. It's iconic. The Criminal Justice Act did have a huge impact though. It cast a negative light on the underground club scene. The general public believed it was dangerous to go out to night clubs, and so it became harder for the younger generations coming through.

You've still got the clubs here though. Trilogy is pretty good. Dappy's playing there soon, haha. But

Blackpool isn't as engaged in the electronic scene, I would say. If you booked The Kooks, it'd sell out in 10 minutes. But if you booked Orbital, I doubt it'd sell out. And it's a shame as well, like the Mura Masa night, everyone was together. Dance music actually brings people together, especially in smaller venues.

What Mura Masa has done has changed the course of what's to come, because he's showed that it's

“Places like Bootleg have been putting the legwork in, showing others it's possible, and now younger kids who are like 18-21 don't think it's strange to put their own nights on. It's had a hugely positive effect.”

possible. Bootleg would never have imagined an artist like him playing there, and now it's happened and it went so well, they'll keep doing it.

There are a few club nights. Crescendos and Sangros. And individuals doing a lot. I saw Samir last night, who I used to manage when I worked at Papa Johns, haha. I used to give him time off when I knew he had a booking, I was like, you need to do your thing. Now he runs a night called Honey I Blew the Woofer, and he also runs Woofer Studios, which is for DJ equipment hire and stuff.

Alta Vita is another one. Trance, deep house and tech house sort of thing. And this is played at Bootleg. There's another place called Dirty Blondes which is great, and there's a venue upstairs called Paradise Coast and they have a resident night there called Fiyah, which is really sick. They play jungle, garage, grime, a bit of everything. If you don't find a genre there you like, you never will, haha.

What's cool is, for the last five or six years, places like Bootleg have been putting the legwork in, showing others it's possible, and now, younger kids who are

like 18-21, don't think it's strange to put their own nights on. It's had a hugely positive effect. It doesn't feel cringe in any way to be 18 and put your own night on. Like, just go do it! Whereas 10 years ago, no one would have done it. But Bootleg did it, with barely any funding, and built it ground up.

The people who run nights like Alta Vita and Crescendo, they all do it part time after their day jobs. They're probably brickees in the day. They're hungry for it and they want to do it. It's the same for me. Some weeks the money just doesn't come in and I have to go do a shift at a bar or clean tables. We do it because we love it.

After Bootleg you've got the Galleon, and a few others, but they all shut too early. There's nowhere to go after 1am so you just end up at someone's gaff.

Afters in Blackpool are different. You create your own nights with your mates. It's the only way you can do it if there's nowhere open. All the DJs have full CDJ set ups in their houses. You go in and there's lights and shit and 20 odd people dancing. It's sick. In Manchester you can go out to Soup Kitchen until 4am

but we don't have that here. So yeah, nine times out of ten, you just end up at someone's gaff and there's DJs going back-to-back!

There's talk of an O2 being built. But to be honest, we don't need big venues like that here. We need smaller, more progressive clubs. We've got those big capacity places already, like the Blackpool Tower. You can put on huge gigs there, they've got two rooms and the Tower Ballroom can fit like 4,000 people. It's a class night out. In Blackpool we've got 4,000 capacity venues. In the last four years we've had Inhaler, Courteeners and Tame Impala play here. Foals and The Waterboys played too.

The Cure's new album is amazing. Robert Smith is a Blackpool lad as well, but no one seems to know. That's why on the new album trailer there was a spinning ice cream. And the video was projected onto the side of the Wedding Chapel. When they released that everyone thought he was going to play a big Blackpool show. He did an interview once and said his first ever gig was in Blackpool so his last will here. So, that's when we know it'll all be over!



Jims Vinyls

59 Topping St, Blackpool FY1 3AF

After Blackpool local and vinyl connoisseur Jim suddenly fell ill, friend and fellow music enthusiast Tony took the opportunity to keep the shop afloat. What Tony inherited was a goldmine of rare, obscure and varied records and memorabilia. One of these being a haul of Japanese imported wax. We spoke to Tony in the shop about his experiences running the store and the lore behind the Japanese haul.

“When the shop first started, Jim had a contact for Japanese imports. I’ve got no idea how he got it and how it started but it was his thing. He’d get the best stuff and people would come all over for it. We used to get it shipped over, a whole container’s worth, and then store it in the warehouse. We had four lads working there, shifting the pallets. We had fucking loads. And it was hit and miss, as you’d expect. You’d go through it, and there was a lot of rubbish, but always some gold. And that’s how this place started up. We’ve still got a load of it now.

The art for Japanese records is gorgeous. People like it. We used to have some with anime cover art on them, and as soon as we put them on the walls they sold. We had some with these early Power Ranger designs, the Super Sentai, and they sold so quickly.

I met Jim because I was going into record shops buying myself. I started coming here as soon as it opened, and then it shut for a while. So, I found his number and rang him up, asked him why, and it was some quite personal stuff, so I just asked him if he wanted me to come in and help out. Then it all took off from there, really. I’m very lucky.”





Skate Like a Lass

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PHOTOGRAPHIC
EXHIBITION BY
Juliet
Klottrup

Skate Like a Lass



プロテック

Over two years, I researched and documented inclusive grassroots skateboarding communities in Northern England, that connect female, marginalised and LGBTQI+ individuals. This project aimed to address gaps in representation, participation and historical documentation within skateboarding. These groups have created safe spaces and welcoming environments, where skating is a tool for empowerment, unlocking freedom and where failure is accepted and celebrated as a rite of passage.





I have learnt from them so much about community, survival, resilience, kinship, trust and bravery. Through moving images and recorded interviews, I sought to authentically capture the personal stories of individuals within these skate communities. Democratising photography and filmmaking by having cameras available for skaters during skate sessions has created a rich archive of images and a three-minute film. The quote 'Skate like a lass' comes from the tag line of 'Cumbria Cyven' a Girls skate group founded in Barrow-in-Furness. With so much thanks and gratitude to everyone who made this possible.









Kris Canavan

Kris Canavan was born in County Down, in the North of Ireland in 1980 and graduated from The University of The West of England (UWE), Bristol in 2004 and they have been presenting artwork at an international level since the early 2000's. From 2019 Canavan has been living and working in Blackpool and has fully embraced the influence of the transient, chaotic and seasonal nature of this Northern seaside town, on their life and work.

From images containing metaphors for failure and futility to statements of love and through actions of conflict and rage, they have sought to make beautiful images that convey collective shame, social decay, loss, longing and the desire for a level playing field through ritualisation.

Photos: Murat Ozkasim

@kristina_canavan_
kris-canavan.com





Kris Canavan



FEELING A LITTLE BIT WAGWAN

Afghan Dan

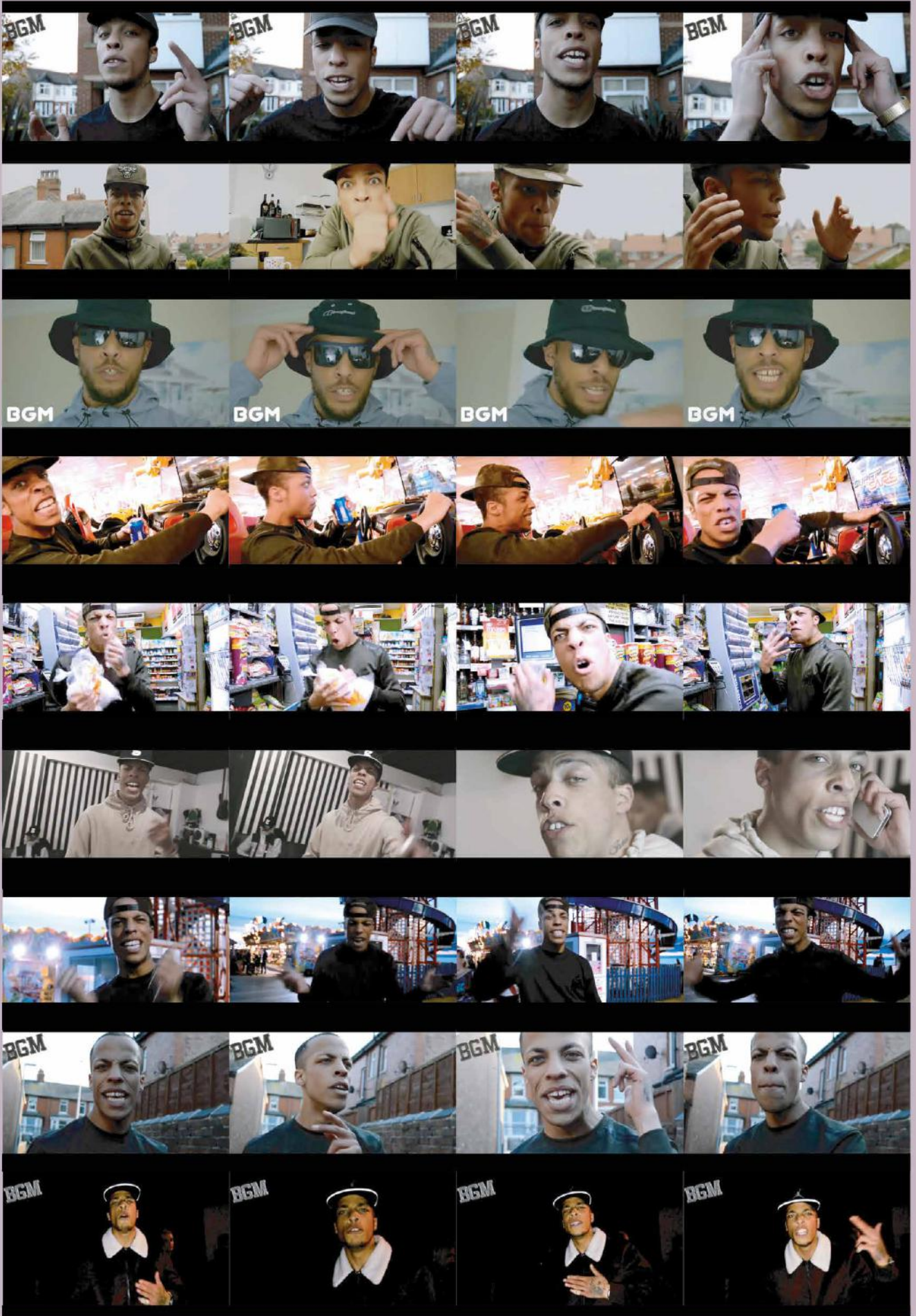
Afghan Dan is an enigmatic (to say the least) Grime MC from Blackpool. Over his whirlwind life and career, he's gone from becoming Blackpool's most notorious and talked about MC, to featuring in various documentaries and boxing with his all-time archnemesis Little T on

KSI's Misfits Boxings. We caught up with him to talk about his experiences being in care homes from an early age, utilising his ADHD to his advantage and being made breakfast by Sox's mum.

Words: Afghan Dan

Photos: Courtesy of Afghan Dan & BGM Media
@afghandan_





Man, I met Sox you know, years ago in Tamworth estate at his mums, we had a little show together. It was so sick. I was such a fan boy when I met him and I remember I woke up in the morning and his mum made me a bowl of cereal. Mate, it was mad.

When I was growing up it was just hard to find stuff to do in Blackpool. I used to go to youth clubs a lot when I was younger, but they all closed when I left school, around when I was 16. There was one called Boise, and the Boys and Girls Club in Queenstown, which everyone went to on my estate. But it was a rough estate, Queenstown. You had to make your own fun, and so obviously a lot of it turned into drinking and partying very quickly. When there's nothing else to do and you're young it just happens. And the partying lasted for a while, longer than I expected, to be honest. You never struggled for a motive in Blackpool, all you needed to do was shout one or two mates and you'd find a party.

When I was 15, I got kicked out my mum's house. I was being a nuisance in the house. I'd always keep her awake and come in at like 3am, asking her to pick me up when she had work. I was a bit of a thief as well in the house, and she just got sick of it. She got in touch with youth workers and they said they'd found me a care home in Manchester. I went because I wanted to do my mum a favour, but I was always trying my hardest to get back to Blackpool. I started running off from the care home and getting myself arrested and then brought back. It was a madness. It was just impulsive behaviour, really. My mum used to call it naughty boy syndrome, because I didn't really have a reason to be doing all these things. My mum worked hard for everything.

When I was about 12 or 13, I was really struggling at school and my mum took me to like a youth mental health service. They gave me some tablets which I was on for about 12 weeks, but they weren't good for me. I was having terrible nights and so I went off them and did some therapy. They did that thing where they give you earplugs and make you look at a screen with calming images

and shit to make you focus on your heartbeat. It was mad but it worked. You learn how to breathe properly and take your time when you feel things building up in you. At one point I got diagnosed with personality disorder, but then they changed it to ADHD, which is what I'm still diagnosed with now.

It's about channelling those energies in the right way, you know. I put it into my music, and the way I perform in videos. That's the best output for my energy now.

There was a local channel in Blackpool called BPM (Blackpool Massive), run by two people from out of town. There was a guy called Trixie, he was from Yorkshire somewhere, and the other guy, I don't actually know. They were putting on performances in the Blackpool area and getting paid for it. This was around 2017, and there wasn't really a channel in Blackpool that was popping off. So, I spoke to my mate Jack about setting up our own, and it all started from there. It was a bit of competition at first with this other channel, but then we started to pop off, and that's how we made BGM.

On living with ADHD

"It's about channelling those energies in the right way, you know. I put it into my music, and the way I perform in videos. That's the best output for my energy now."

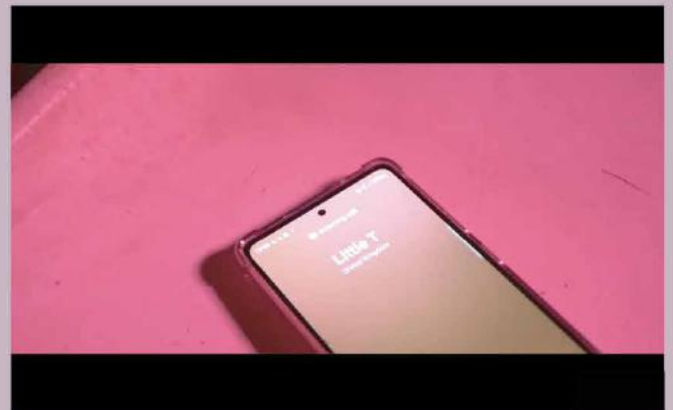
I posted one video on there, and it did okay, like 3,000 views or something. Doesn't seem like much but it felt like a lot at the time, and then things started to grow. I was posting the videos on Facebook, and in one video I randomly dissed this lad from Blackpool called Mitch Edwards. He was doing music as well and was like a couple years older than me, and had his own beef with another Blackpool artist at the time. But when I posted my video and we started sending them back and forth, we got loads more views. A lot of people don't know that part of my journey, like that's how it all got going for me. I carried on doing these diss tracks, and then got into clashing. After that we started making our own music and I was recording my own stuff, getting really creative. I did one with MC Smally, one called Ring Ring, and another called Trick or Treat, and they were all starting to pop off. Then came the Noisy documentary and after that I started getting bookings everywhere. Brighton, Manchester, London. It went big.

It's all about creativity to me. It's all I've ever known. I remember being introduced to music production at school and straight away making a beat and thinking, this is what I want to be doing. That's what my ADHD was drawn towards.

I went to a few different studios when I was a kid. West Coast Studios was one, but I couldn't really afford it. So, I ended up going to a lot of home studios, just my mate's houses. You could go to some, chill and have a spliff on the sofa and just create. It wasn't always the best equipment but we got what we needed to. There are really not many studios in Blackpool, and at a young age, I think it's actually better to do it with your friends. You feel more comfortable and confident, which is what music is all about. Your mates can tell you when you're shit as well, you know? Like, at least you know your audience and can learn when you make mistakes!

It's still hard to get a studio. I've only just got a laptop and microphone after doing KSI's Misfits Boxing. I'm 29 and I've never been able to get to this position before. But what do you really need for a studio? All you need is two, two speakers, a microphone, your laptop and your headphones, and that's you!

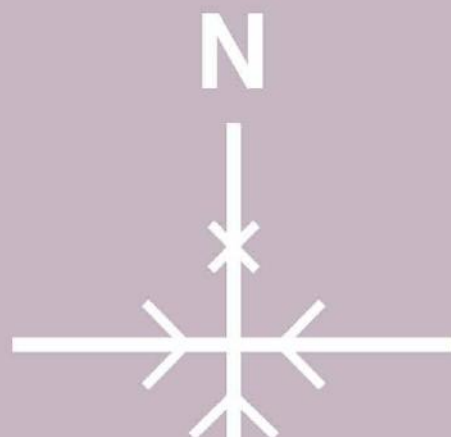
“At a young age it's better to go and be with your friends and to do [music] in the company of your friends to gain confidence and character out of those situations. You're building community with people that are backing you and supporting your dreams. ...If you're going to sit in your bedroom and rap all day and never show anybody, well, it's your word against everyone else's. So it's better to work within a community. At least you know your audience and you learn when you make mistakes.”



The fight with me and Little T was a madness. My shoulder popped out and it was a bit catastrophic. He didn't knock me out, my shoulder went, you know? It wasn't a KO, even though at the end it said KO, it was a technical knockout. But you know, I did it to myself. I put myself out there, and it was good to see us both together as well, because we definitely had some issues that were unresolved before that night in it. So, you know, us doing that was mature. We should show maturity, really, because we're not kids anymore, you know.

Me and Little T started off good. He did a video in an alleyway early on and I thought it was pretty good to be honest. We both started to get viewed online, and we did a video together. Then like a week later he sends for me out of nowhere with Dylan Brewer. He makes a diss track rapping about me. And I thought, fair enough, but this is making you look weird because me and you were in the video last week together. He sent for me quite a few times and I never responded, not once! I waited until he was 18 because I didn't want to be clashing a younger. He looked at me funny a few times in the street, and I was like, what's all this about? And so a few years ago I made that video Little Muppet which was my send to him, where I was basically like, yo, Little T, I'm your dad. But yeah, I'd love to do the fight again, or someone else on the same promotion. It was good to do.

At the moment, I'm thinking of writing an album. I just need to compile a load of my tracks together. It's been difficult recently because I've got a lot going on with getting a job. I've had three or four jobs in the last year or something, and it's just hard to find people who will give you a chance, especially with my criminal history. But I'm persistent. I'm going to find somewhere soon. But alongside that I'm just looking around for inspiration. It's been hard, I'm not going to lie, this life, but I'm just writing a lot and trying to focus on that. I'm also learning how to record myself, which is a big step, teaching myself what all the buttons on Logic mean. But I'm getting there and I'm in no rush. It's a journey bro!



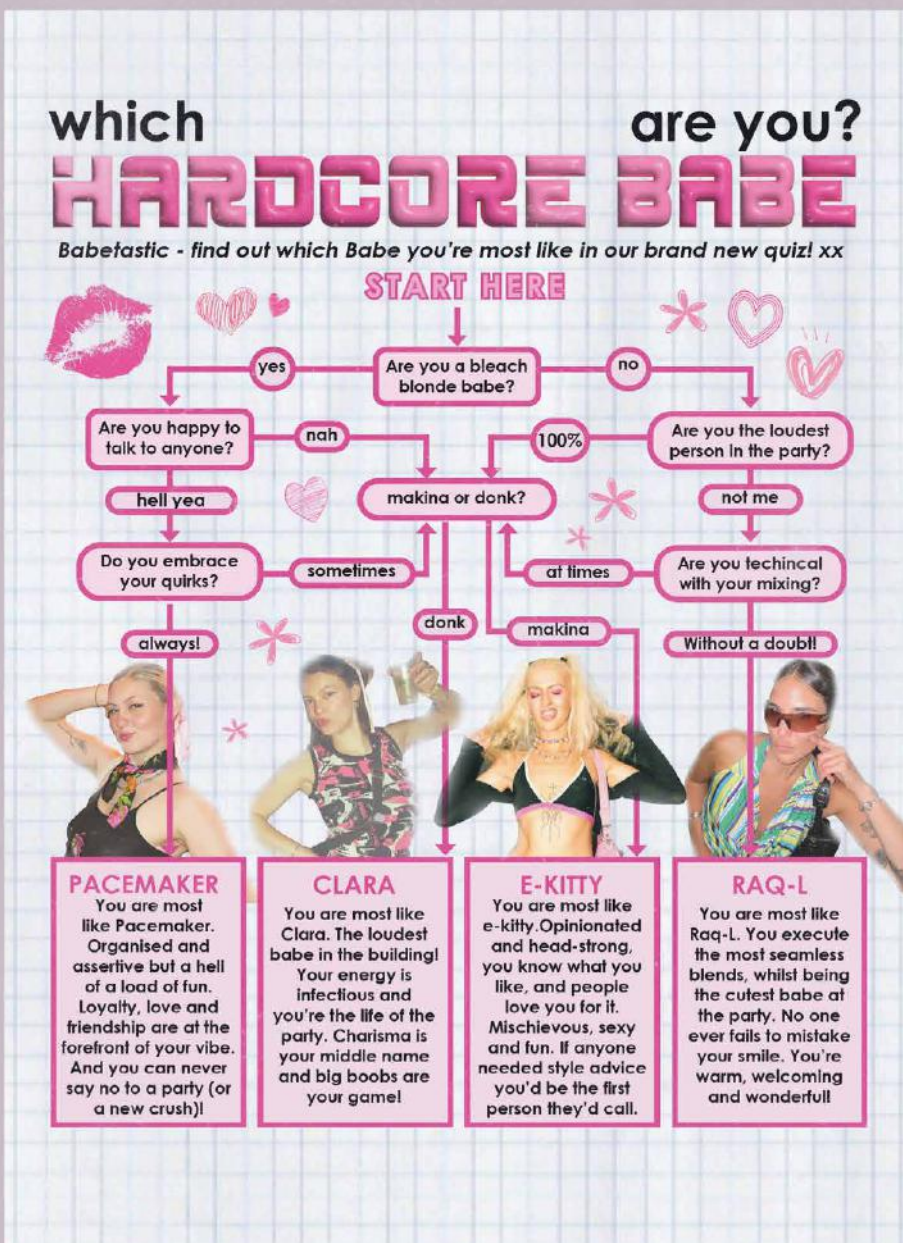


Hardcore Babes

Hardcore Babes is a DJ girl group born from years of friendship and a shared love for dance music. We emerged from dancefloors across the North, Coming from Blackpool, Newcastle, Lancaster, and Lisbon (via Sunderland). We're committed to using our platform to build a nightlife culture in Liverpool that's joyful, accessible, and inclusive. Hardcore Babes know no discrimination!!! We're building a database to spotlight underrepresented DJs and creatives across the North West, creating space for promotion, bookings, and visibility. We stay open to discussion, to learning out loud, and to actively shifting power - not just aesthetics. If you're a DJ, artist, or producer based in the North West and feel you come from an underrepresented background, you can sign up via our website.

Words: Hardcore Babes
Photos: Maddie Corleone
Graphic Design: Rowan Pacey

@hardcorebabes_
linktr.ee/hardcorebabes



HONEY... HARDCORE BABES ARE CALLING !!!

**R U AN ARTIST FROM AN UNDER REPRESENTED
BACKGROUND IN THE NORTH WEST?!?!**



**SIGN UP TO THE HARDCORE
BABEBASE NOW X**



Bootleg Social

19 06 25

30 Topping St, Blackpool FY1 3AQ

Curated By Mia Lily

Curated by Blackpool's own Mia Lily. A DJ, producer and artistic director with a background in jazz and classical music, Mia has taken her euphoric 4x4 sound all over the world, with sets in Los Angeles, Hong Kong and Berlin. Mia chose the independently-owned gem of Blackpool's nightlife scene Bootleg Social to host the night, and each DJ brought their own unique sound and energy to the event. Mia went b2b with Mura with a mix of bass, dubstep and 4x4, matched by Pacemaker and Clara's B2B of happy hardcore. The pair who are a growing name in the northern DJ circuit with their Hardcore Babes collective, shared the stage with local musicians D-Foc and Hometones, both producers whose Aphex-inspired blend of dance music set the perfect tone for the night.

Poster Design: Grumpy Girl Graphics

Photos: Yushy & Alex Annand

MURA MASA

PRESENTS

LOCAL

WITH



MIA LILY

UNDERSUNG PEOPLE FROM OVERLOOKED PLACES

POWERED BY

Relentless

TICKETS: £5

BOOTLEG
SOCIAL

BLACKPOOL

LINE UP

Mura Masa
Mia Lily
Pacemaker
D-Foc
Hometones

JUNE 19TH
10 PM - 2 AM



Freeform





Where were you born and where are you based now?

Raised in the outskirts of Blackpool, studied in London and I now live in Liverpool.

When did you start making music?

I've been DJing since 2019. I had my first gig in 2022. I started dabbling in making music last year but have no releases (yet). My dream job as a kid was a radio presenter/DJ. My dad had turntables and I asked him to teach me when I was 12, which he never ended up doing but I taught myself anyway.

What's your software/DAW of choice?

FL studio - my friend gave me his log in to use his account when I had just graduated and was broke as hell. Big ups Joycey.

What is your relationship with social media?

I'd say I'd have a pretty good relationship with social media, in that I just see it as a place to express myself and collect memories - like a digital scrap book. However, I don't know where the line is drawn between professionalism and personality. Guess that's up to me and I'm still figuring it out one shitpost at a time!

How does playing on the radio compare to the club?

When I'm DJing on radio shows I like to see it as piecing a puzzle together, layering sounds, testing if I can create something new. It's more experimental for me. (depending on the gig, this could be in the club too). For the most part, in the club I'm just thinking about energy. Selecting bangers and mixing quickly, keeping people on their feet and locked into the dance floor. Usually my DJing is choppy and sometimes - intentionally or not - a little erratic.

What does community mean to you and your music?

Community is everything to me and has been a major part of my musical journey. I will always back where I'm from and the people around me. I always rep Blackpool, and now that I live in Liverpool, I rep that too. The reason why I love Liverpool is because the city's community is so strong, and I love community! Without my people I'd be nothing. Strength in numbers and power in unity. My DJ origin story started on the dance floor, and the dance is nothing if there's no one there. Music is meant to be shared.

What are some of the challenges you face as an artist?

Financial struggles have been real but I'm driven enough to find things to make stuff work even when I have no money. Not having financial backing had definitely made me more creative and value authentic connections, giving and receiving support when needed. Like I said, strength in numbers and power in unity!

Favourite thing to do outside of music?

Hang out with my friends and fam. Play my switch. Drink coffee. Be in nature. Dance. Read. Watch movies. I also enjoy cartwheeling and twirling with my best friend/fellow Hardcore Babe Clara.

Are you a reader?

Yes, I'm a reader! Just read Susan Sontag's notes on camp. Went down a treat.

Are you a gamer? If so, what format/console/games?

Hell yeah. I'm a diehard Skyrim and Zelda fan. Recently I've been on an animal crossing grind. I play my switch, but the consoles I have are all pretty vintage babe. I got original xbox, the first edition xbox 360 and a Wii. I really want to collect all the vintage Nintendo consoles.

Favourite place to escape to?

My mums house in Cumbria is a real zen zone. Whenever I need some R+R I will always retreat to there (sorry mum). She moved out of Blackpool a couple of years ago but my dad still flies the flag on South Shore.



Pacemaker



Where are you from?

Currently based in Manchester with roots in Blackpool.
London born, Glaswegian blood.

When did you start making music?

I've been playing or making on & off for about 20 years. My dad was in bands so his influence led to me playing guitar and drums in my youth. As I've got older my taste is getting wider and wider whilst becoming narrower and narrower in equal measure

Do you have a particular process to making music?

Once something is sounding interesting I'll tend to let the dust settle for a while, I might not go back to it for a few months then I'll dive back in with a fresh set of lugs and a different mindset, if its feeling ready for the outside world then I'll polish it off if I feel like it

How long does it take for you to finish a track

between 2 hours and 10 years... or more

How would you describe some of your recent musical output?

a little bit light, little bit dark

How do you distribute your music?

out the window if it's bad and through the walls if it's good

What's the best way to approach other artists

the smoking area is where dreams are made...

What is your relationship with social media?

I could quit any day now

How does playing on the radio compare to the club?

In most club settings there's the expectation for the music to flow more fluidly where the joints are less apparent. I guess radio allows room for a more collage-like approach to the sonics being played

Who are some of your favourite current underground artists?

what is underground anymore?

What does community mean to you and your music?

In the end, it will be the only thing we have left. Hang on tight

What is your biggest fear in making music?

no fear. If the music feels bad in some way then there is a frequency or energy to be attended to

What are some of the challenges you face as an artist?

The dock started melting then they stuck an apple on my face. You try chopping your own ear off in record time record under those conditions... Rigged! Did someone say Guinness?

Best way to self-care/unwind?

bum, move, think



D-Foc



Where are you from?

Born and Raised in Blackpool

When did you start making music?

When I was 14 I think, mainly because I spent my GCSE art & RE lessons scouring Bandcamp for vaporwave projects or finding experimental underground music on YouTube.

Do you have a particular process?

Mainly use a piano to layout chords and Melodys because if it doesn't sound good at its core it probably won't sound good with all those plugins on it, but I like glitch and noise so I'm a hypocrite

How long does it take for you to finish a track?

Normally a few weeks but I'm trying to enjoy faster paced writing more, less self doubt clouding releases

How do you distribute your music?

Usually distrokid but I prefer uploading to Bandcamp, there's something satisfying with the amount of care you can put into a Bandcamp release.

Best way to approach other artists

Offer them an afternoon tea for 2 in which you bring a proposal bible with you and wear a spiffing top hat with Bluetooth speakers sewn into it to blast your demos out of.

Relationship with social media

I like tumblr and instagram, I think for artists it's a nice blogging, catalogue and portfolio tool. However, I like a distance between me and an audience.

Artist recommendations

Swami Sound, Bickle, Daz Veferens, Dreamcrusher, Jam Side Up, Twopen and Noxious Rain

Dream collaborations

Jim O'Rourke would be the peak but I feel if I got to do something with Swami Sound, ctf or Porter Robinson I'd know I'd have made it

Importance of community

A lot, working with friends and building a community as artists is amazing, I don't really have an audience so it would be cool to find out that aspect too

Challenges you face as an artist

Probably my health, it's made it a lot harder making music at points and I feel I've lost a lot of prime music making years due to illness and health. Perfume genius is the only artist who remotely relates to what I've been through but you've gotta keep making and keep going forward

Outside of music

I've been getting into cooking more, I make an insane red sauce spaghetti and my meats have been coming on a long way, I also make a decent steak sandwich.

Films

End of Evangelion is my all time favourite but some others are Ikiru, Touch of Evil, Late Spring, The Graduate, if you're interested in more dm me for my letterboxd

Games

I play on PC but I'm a big Cruelty Squad, Melty Blood, Elden Ring and Yakuza "gamer"

Favourite place to escape to?

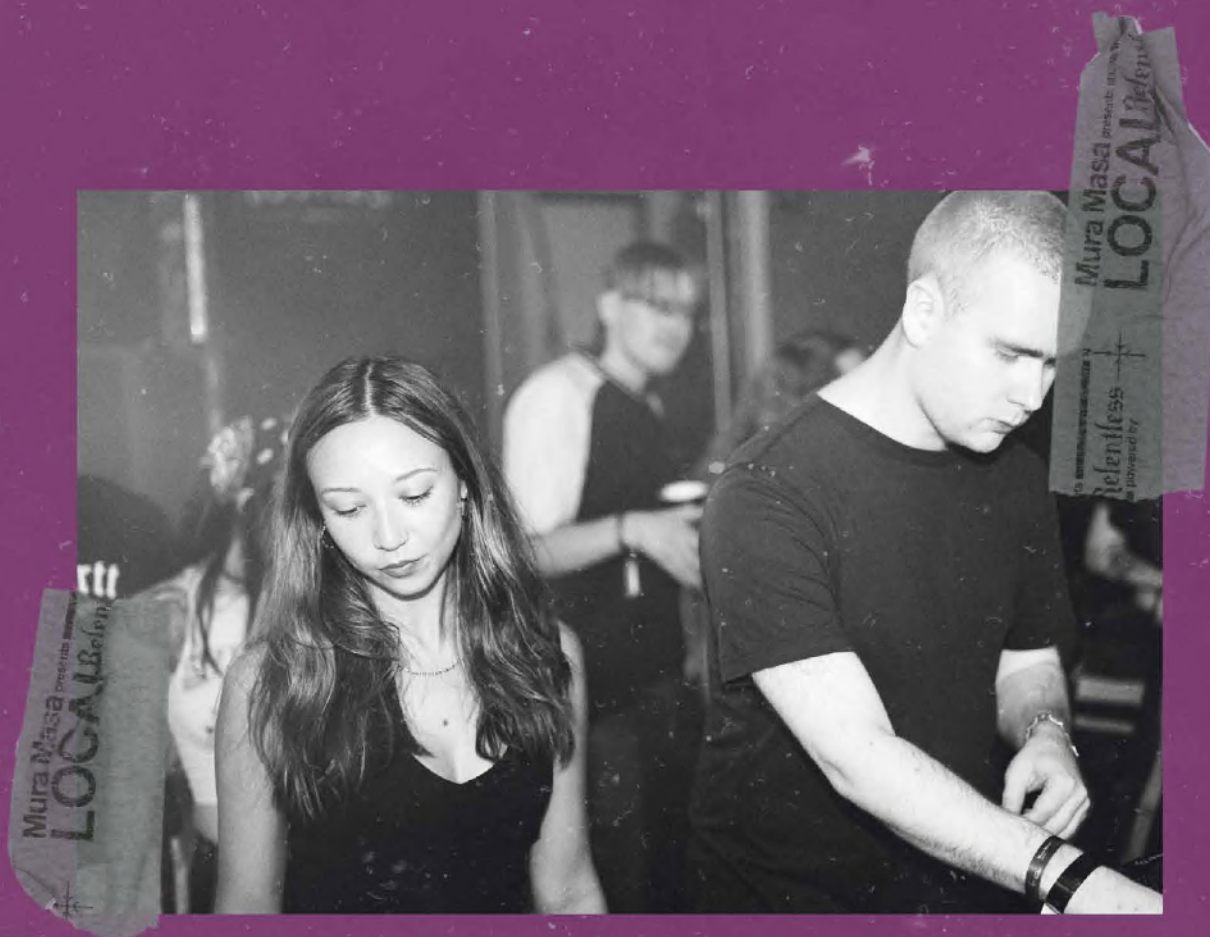
Blackpool sea front, via Harrowside Hill, listen to Eureka by Jim O'Rourke (entire album), have a cry and soak in the beauty of life

One object you can't live without?

My Upadictinib pills, this one's actually real

Hometones





"The difference between coming from a working-class background and a background with money, is you just don't have the security to fall back on."

Mia Lily

Mura Masa presents
LOCAL Relentless
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Mura Masa presents
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Bradford



bradford

Once one of the world's leading textile manufacturers, the city has long had history of community action and togetherness. Today, the world-renowned anarchist social centre 1 in 12 Club still stands strong after 40 years, and you can see artists and musicians perform at a variety of different sized venues, from the intimate and iconic Bootleg Social to the newly renovated Bradford Live. Local businesses continue to flourish, and you can easily be fitted out in a variety of wares from Cannon Mills' Market. Spend a day wandering around the Trapezium Arts Gallery or Impressions Gallery, and The Record Café provides a welcoming musical solace with a side of beer.

- ■ **Record Cafe** Record Shop/Cafe
- ■ **1 in 12 Club** Venue & Social Centre
- ■ **The Disc** DJ Store DJ Shop
- ■ **Cannon Mills** Market
- ■ **South Square Centre** Arts Programme
- ■ **Mannings Musicals** Music Shop
- ■ **Impressions Gallery** Bookshop & Gallery
- ■ **Trapezium Arts** Art Gallery
- ■ **Bolling Hall** Museum / Event Space
- ■ **Grove** Bookshop
- ■ **Access All Areas** Music Shop
- ■ **The Underground** Venue
- ■ **Apothecary Gallery** Gallery
- ■ **Mannings Musicals** Music Shop
- ■ **Access All Areas** Music Shop













Owned and run by its membership as a collective based on anarchist principles, The 1 in 12 Club is the largest anarchist social centre in Europe, with political campaigning at its core. In the 1980s it was one of the primary locations for the UK alternative punk scene, and in the 1990s played host to much of the country's straight edge metalcore scene.

Gigs and events occur weekly and they are currently working to fundraise refurbishment in time for their 40th anniversary. Musician, activist and all-round local legend, Echo Machine One, was kind enough to give us a tour of the space and introduce us to Carl White, the current chair, who told us about the past, present and future of the club.

Words: Carl White

Images: Courtesy The 1 in 12 Club

@1in12club

1in12.com

1 in 12

21-23 Albion Street Bradford BD1 2LY



This place started in 1981, and came out of the Bradford Claimants Union which was fighting unemployment in the area. Eventually we got some funding to buy this building, and over two years with the help of a contractor, 300 volunteers and access coordinators, the building opened. And now we've been here for 37 years.

We own the building. Me, personally, along with being the chair, organising the bar collective and doing the gig bookings, I've also been leading on the refurb project as a coordinator and doing the social media, all as a volunteer in my spare time. I've got my own business outside of this which aims to promote arts, community and cultural events all over West Yorkshire and the surrounding regions.

“Over two years with the help of a contractor, 300 volunteers and access coordinators, the building opened. Now we've been here for 37 years.”

I've been involved in organisations like this and volunteering for 20 years now. I know what I'm doing. I just want to plough on and get things done well. Hopefully when the refurb money gets released, we can start work next month and get some breathing space. I thought it was going to be six months or year job and it has ended up being 18 months. It's not sustainable for me. I've loved doing it, but it's not sustainable. I'm committed to this place for at least the next couple of years. Next year is the 45th anniversary of the member's club being formed. 2028 is 40 years of being open in this building, and then 2031 will be the 50th anniversary of the club.

In the next six years there's so much happening, and I don't want to miss any of it. So, I'm like, let's start some plans and build it up. We used to have the anarchist book fair which we want to start up again. We also used to have The 1 in 12 Peasants Collective who had an allotment plot which is now home to a community farm.

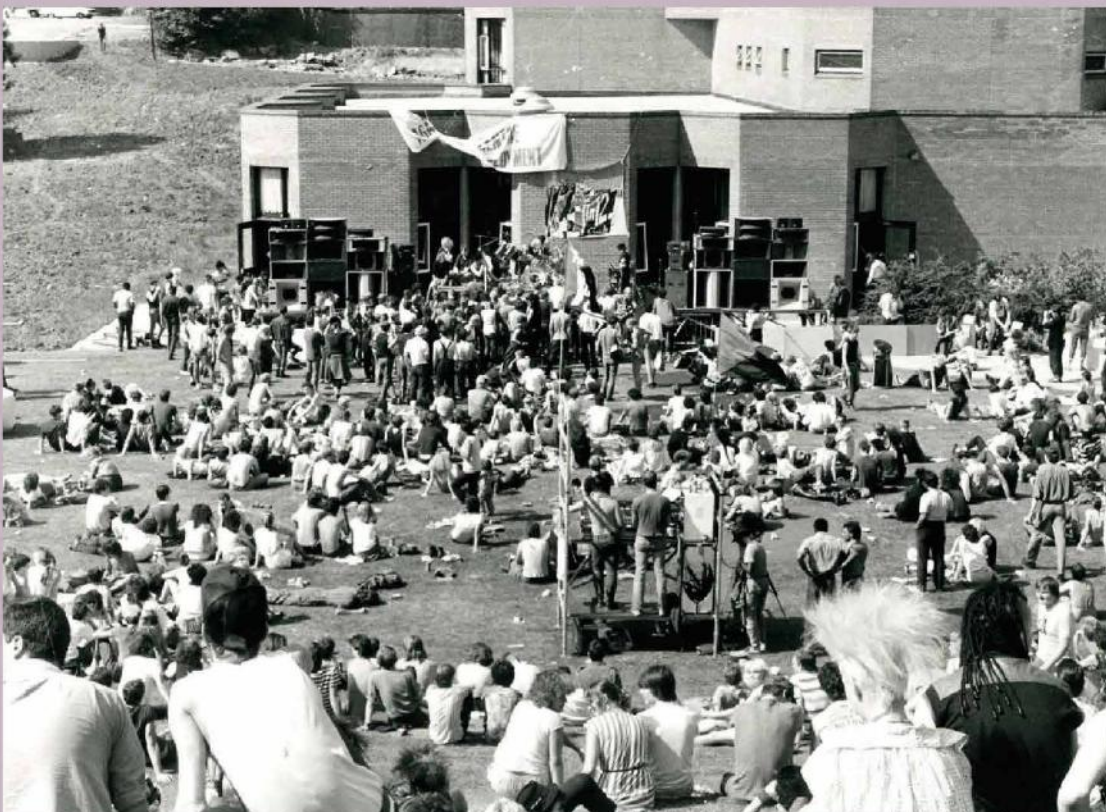


Downstairs is the gig venue - last night we put a show on - underneath the venue is the cellar where the printing press used to be. You've got the music studio which is in use every day, every week - there's a local band in there now, rehearsing and recording an album. There's so much history in this place. It used to home local football teams and cricket teams, so much has happened in this building.

We have international links of solidarity with squats in Lisbon and people from Palestine and all over the world. In the 80s we were supporting the minors. You know, we've supported people the entire time we've been open, and other people have supported us. Now we've got friendships with similar, autonomous social centres all over the place. Recently we've had Canadian bands, American bands, Irish bands. A few years ago, we had an Indonesian punk band and a Japanese punk band played here last year. This place is world famous in the right circles.

We're looking to bring the café back at the moment to get more people in. It wasn't a priority, but the fact it's work that can be done now that won't get disrupted by further work is a win-win for us, and it opens up another income stream. It allows us to be more of a

"We've supported people the entire time we've been open, and other people have supported us. Now we've got friendships with similar, autonomous social centres all over the place. Recently we've had Canadian bands, American bands, Irish bands. A few years ago, we had an Indonesian punk band, and a Japanese punk band played here last year. This place is world famous in the right circles."



social centre again as well. We're surviving as a gig venue but when you're only operating from 6pm onwards it's hard. We used to be a member's bar and we were open all the time, but for the past two years I've been running it just as a music venue. So, I'm just trying to keep it simple: get to this refurb, shut for a short time, rethink the governance and build it from the ground up. Hopefully what I've been doing here in the last 18 months, with the gig bookings and getting people back into the club has made a difference. Amazing things are happening here, and it definitely feels more welcoming.

My 40th birthday, which I had no plans for two weeks beforehand, all of a sudden turned into one of the best gigs we've had here. Wednesday night, last July, it was insane. Just like pure chance and coincidence and mutual aid and solidarity. Made it my best birthday party I've ever had. Doing stuff is better than nothing.

We've been making this venue free to hire to cut down on the risks for external promoters, and we've been covering most of the costs with what we take on the bar, so we're not risking money putting acts on. Going forward we'd like to be more ambitious. It's all good and well keeping afloat, but if you're ambitious about expanding in a meaningful way, then you can start to employ people to work at the café, and you can have better facilities.

We've got various websites and social media where we're posting about the gigs we have coming up. You can join us as a member, too. We're hoping to get some merchandise up online as well, but donations always help. Just do what you can, here or in your own area, and it'll make a difference.

"There's so much history in this place. It used to home local football teams and cricket teams, so much has happened in this building.

We have international links of solidarity with squats in Lisbon and people from Palestine and all over the world. In the 80s we were supporting the minors."



20 years retrospective



1981: Claimants Union



1982: BBC TV's "Something Else"



1983: "Skive Off & Jive" - 2nd Free Festival



1984: Records - "Enemies of the State"



1985: Solidarity as the miners strike ends



1986: Publications: Freemasons in Bradford



1987: The Building Collective - Half done



1988: Albion St. Opens



1989: Cafe - 'Ma Brench's' opens



1990: Booking - Chumbawamba



1991: The building gets a new mural



1992: The 'Riot Girls' arrive



1993: Raves - "Stimulations" formed



1994: AFC - Hanau tournament



1995: Peasants - Allotments taken



1996: May Day in Barcelona



1997: Reclaiming May Day in Bradford



1998: Kids Club set up



1999: Games collective - More trophies



2000: Drama collective: "Murder in the Library"

Echo Machine One

Post-punk agitprop vanguards 'Echo Machine One' are an unstoppable force of sonic revolutionism from Bradford. Their DIY ethics and messages of solidarity through music and zines drive forward the morals of the 1 in 12 Club. They frequently busk and perform at independent shows, poetry nights and film screenings. All their music is available for free via their Bandcamp.

Images & Words: Echo Machine One
echomachineone.bandcamp.com
[@echomachineone](https://twitter.com/echomachineone)



First off, what's your name, where are you from and what's your favourite meal deal combo?

My name is Doom Skrola. I come from the year 2084. Echo Machine One is the vehicle we use to communicate messages back through space and time. We do not have meal deal combos in 2084. Capitalism has been defeated.

Is Echo Machine One a solo endeavour? How is the music going?

Echo Machine One is a group: Doom Skrola is the singer, the Wizard plays melodica and didgeridoo, and we also have an electric guitarist and booming bass player. We are currently recording our debut album.

How did you get into zine making? Are there any particular zines you read growing up that inspired you?

Zines are a fantastic way to spread revolutionary propaganda. The 1 in 12 Club has an excellent selection. And shout out Bradford Zine Fayre, it is a must attend event every year!

What are your main ethos' and ideals with zine making? What core messages are you delivering?

"Growth for the sake of growth is the ideology of the cancer cell." We want to raise awareness around how Capitalism works and how it can be defeated. "Smash This Pyramid Scheme" is our latest release. "Another World Is Possible" is the next instalment.

How would you recommend someone get into making their own zine? Are there any resources or tips you could offer to inspire others?

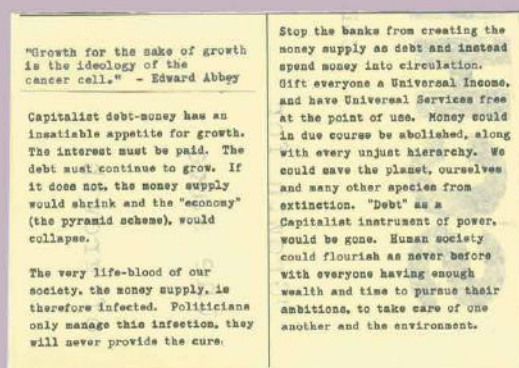
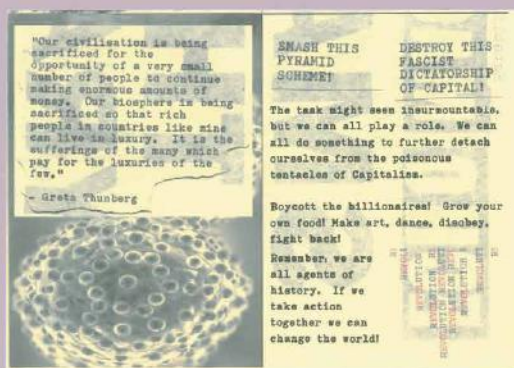
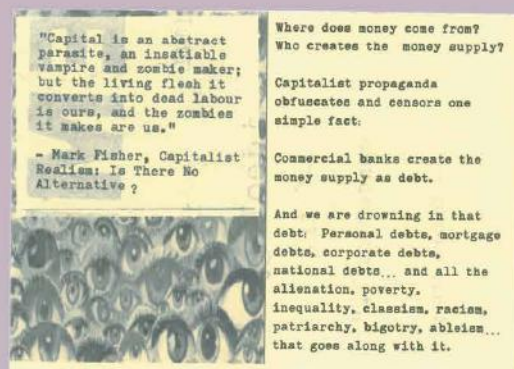
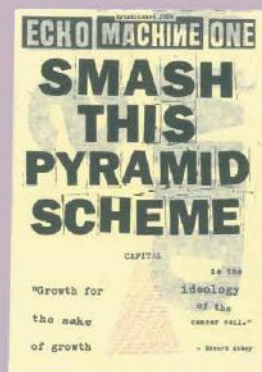
Start! Grab a piece of paper, fold it, and away you go. Freedom of the press only exists for those who own one. Make your voice heard.

I saw you were busking as part of The Bradford Progress, could you explain a little about that initiative?

It was a BD25 City of Culture event with live music travelling across the district. The highlight for me was improvisational ambient duo Gilank playing in the historic and beautiful Undercliffe Cemetery at dusk. Their whole set was recorded and then played on a loop through the night.

What are some of the best spots in Bradford? Where is really pushing progressive, grassroots culture within the city?

The 1 in 12 Club is a real gem in the city, but there are so many great spots. The Trapezium Art Gallery always has great exhibitions. And the Apothecary Gallery in Thornton is another not-so-hidden gem. Bradford has a lot to offer, even outside of being the City of Culture.



The Record Cafe

45 - 47 North Parade, Bradford BD1 3JH

Words: Keith Wildman
therecordcafe.co.uk
@therecordcafe

Honestly, the more records shops in this world, the better. Even if it is a HMV, or a supermarket, which I've seen are starting to sell some new popular releases. At least it means people are buying records, which is the most important thing these days. The supermarkets aren't daft, they're not going to stock things that don't sell. So, people must want them, and the more demand there is, the more people like me have a bigger pool of potential record-buyers to sell to.

In Bradford, we used to have loads of record shops. We had an EGS and a HMV, and two Our Price record shops. Then there was Wax Museum, which was two floors of brilliant second-hand stuff, and Rocks Off. There used to be a chalk board above the entrance when you walked in to Rocks Off, which had all the local gig listings, and they sold merch and magazines and all sorts. It was amazing. Closed around 20 years ago. Like most things, it goes in 20-year cycles!

We're in our 11th year now, and we've seen a lot in that time. We opened when Bradford was having a bit of a comeback, around 2014. There was a lot happening around then. But in the 1980s and 90s was when Bradford and the rock scene was at its peak. It's historically a place where heavy metal and goth has thrived. In the early 2000s the place just crashed. Lost a lot of its soul. We opened when there was a bit of a revival happening, and things were going steady until Covid hit. Post-Covid we've just been figuring it out and learning how to adapt. I spent months and months trying to digitally catalogue my collections to try and sell online.

Not only does this Bradford essential stock the best in classic and new vinyl releases, The Record Café also boasts a charcuterie and a selection of local and world beers, for which it's been named Bradford CAMRA Pub of the Year four times. Having celebrated its 10-year anniversary in 2024, you don't want to miss out on purveying their selection of contemporary releases, tasting the hand-carved Jamón Ibérico, or relaxing with a local ale.



I've got quite a varied selection here, a lot of stuff that I like and listen to. It's all a bit BBC Radio 6 Music! We've got stuff like Wu-Tang Clan, Primal Scream, Love and Beastie Boys. All sorts. We probably should do a lot more heavy metal because that's what Bradford people have always tended to like, but I'm trying not to have too much of any one thing. We're the only record shop left here so we have to cater to a large variety of people and tastes.

I was a huge fan of hip hop in the 1990s, and I've tried to stay across all the new artists. We stock Tyler The Creator and things like that too for younger audiences. When I was growing up in Bradford, I started off listening to 60s rock like Elvis, and then got into heavy metal. I was massively into Iron Maiden, mostly because there was such a big rock scene in Halifax and Bradford.

THE
RECORD
CAFÉ
BRADFORD
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All the bands used to come and play The Queen's Hall. We had Pearl Jam, Oasis, The Verve. I know there's a bit of a scene in Bradford now for rap as well, with Bad Boy Chiller Crew and the like, but it's always been rock friendly just because of the venue sizes.

Bradford is good for venues. The Queen's Hall is great and Bradford Live has just reopened after a 20-year fight with the council to save it. It's one of the biggest mid-sized venues outside of London. We have the St George's Hall and the University, and The 1 in 12 Club has been there for ages and it's a legendary small venue for rock and hardcore.

Obviously, this year Bradford's the UK City of Culture, which has brought in a lot more people and I've seen the impact in the shop. But it's a tricky one because what happens in January and February? Will there be an even bigger drop off than normal years because people think they've done Bradford and that's that now? I just hope it creates longevity. There have been a lot of temporary venues and initiatives set up for it, and you'd like to think it'll have a bit more of a lasting impact. Will it motivate and enrich local artists to continue to produce? That's what's important.



ALCHEMICAL HUMANITY

Humanity is the final word on the Bradford Coat of Arms.
The Arabic word 'an-naas' in this piece means 'humanity'.

The human figure here is in space, or beyond space; certainly not on earth – yet the pigment used for ink in this piece is 'Bradford Earth,' made from the earth of Bradford City Football Ground and dye from Shaggy Ink Cap mushrooms growing in Manningham. The piece therefore reflects the two aspects accorded to a human being by Arabic Tradition: Earth & the Imaginal or Soil & the Soul or Nature & the Transcendent.

The practice sheets for this art seemed to have power. I was astonished at how all the practice sheets seemed to have special energy. In the end, I decided to exhibit one of the practice sheets. And added the pigment 'Curried Fire.'
Based on the Nastaliq script.

Razwan Ul-Haq

Artist Razwan Ul-Haq is a QEST scholar (QEST Royal Warrant Holders Association) who began Arabic calligraphy using hand-cut bamboo pens whilst growing up in Lancashire, England. Initially inspired by his uncle, the award-winning Arabic calligrapher and scribe Maulvi Fazal Azeem, Razwan Ul-Haq has spent his life creating visual art out of distilling traditional Arabic Calligraphy techniques.

Since 2024, Razwan has been on a quest to gather Bradford's DNA in the form of pigment. Beginning with the well-known curry house scene of Bradford's nightlife and then collecting used engine oil from one of Bradford's oldest garages. Imagine if we could use pollutants to make art materials - wouldn't that be great?

Images & Words: Razwan Ul-Haq
@razwanartist
ulhaq.com





ALCHEMICAL PROGRESS

Progress is the first word on the Bradford Coat of Arms.

The Arabic words 'taqadam' and 'taraqi' in this calligraphic piece can both mean 'progress'. The latter has entered the Urdu and Farsi canon.

What is progress? Is it an illusion? Is it a source of motivation or pressure?

The words were composed using hand-cut bamboo pens and without pencil lines or guides. Based on Nastaliq and Shikaste scripts.

The hand-made pigments in this piece were gathered by residents from the Bradford district and are: 'Bradford Earth', 'Industrial Brown', 'Brick Orange', 'Salt's Yellow' and 'Beck Rock'. The original pigments are on display at City Library and Bradford Industrial Museum.



ALCHEMICAL INDUSTRY

One of the Arabic word words that could be used for 'industry' is 'sanaa-a'.

Did you know that motor cars were once built in Bradford? The Jowett Jupiter automobile has been drawn onto the calligraphy. This 1950's car represents the paradox of modern industry (you can see its sculpted beautiful form at the Bradford Industrial Museum). Industry brings material benefits but what of the cost?

The pigments in this piece are; 'Bradford Earth', 'Motoring Shadow', 'Woollen White', 'Bronte Cloud' and 'Curried Fire.' One of the inks is created with used engine oil from a well-established local garage in BD5. The original pigments are displayed at City Library and Bradford Industrial Museum.



For Sylvie
110cm x 180cm • 2023

Chrissie Freeth

Images / Words: Chrissie Freeth
@chrissiefreeth
chrissiefreeth.wixsite.com

Living and working in Saltaire, West Yorkshire, Chrissie Freeth's practice reembodies the village's origins as a model village to house the workers of a colossal local textile mill. The loom has been central to the lives of women and to storytelling for millennia. Her work continues this tradition transforming small personal moments, fragile memories, and unfronted experiences into large-scale handwoven, contemporary tapestries. The discipline and time it takes to weave a tapestry, and the constraining nature of warp and weft, forms a creative and practical boundary, a place of freedom and safety to rebuild and face up to what would otherwise be left hidden and festering. She plays with traditional iconography, symbolism and narrative, and studies the skills and form of pre-renaissance tapestries, when the medium existed in its own right rather than as an imitator of paintings. They remain a foundational inspiration and academic interest, whereas Freeth's work re-imagines them for modern relevance.



Song Of The Woods

260cm x 170cm • 2021

Song of the Woods is the third tapestry Chrissie wove in response to Covid. During lockdown she began walking in some local woods and it became an essential part of her daily process, somewhere to think about her work and to confront herself, her experiences and her memories and where she could reshape them into stories which form the basis of her tapestries. Song of the Woods is also a play on the ubiquitous hunting tapestries of the medieval period although it is the self that is being sought rather than the metaphorical unicorn or unfortunate boar. Song of the Woods was shortlisted for the Cordis Prize.



The Waterbearers

222cm x 176cm • 2022

Chrissie states she has given up a lot to live the life she has and do what she does - relationships, health, living standards. Although she states she loves her life she is conscious others with a more conventional outlook might judge her. Should she have had a more conventional life? A family, kids, heating, a stable job? Is she wasting her life? And yet had she lived a conventional life, she wonders what would there be left after her. Great grand kids who won't even know her name? No artist can know if their work will outlast her or if the council's house clearance service will scoop it all into a skip after one's desiccated corpse is finally found, but is there a chance, with she does, after she is long gone, something of her could be here long after? Might she make a difference? But in seeking to leave something behind, Chrissie wonders can wonder if she is wasting her time while she is here? This is the theme of *The Waterbearers*. The seated figure is making that choice between life as a poet/artist or that more conventional life. It draws on a lot of literature she read at the time including medieval bardic literature.



Chrissie Freeth

Slugggy Beats

It's impossible to ignore the influence of the "Bradford Sound" on pop music today. The huge rise of MCs like BBCC and Marky B show that the bassline sound is here to stay. A stones throw from Bradford is Wakefield, where producer Slugggy Beats is the one crafting these inimitable beats. Having produced for pretty much everyone in the scene, he now uploads production tutorials and has a vast online presence with socials rammed with production videos and sample packs for anyone trying to hone their bangers.

Photo: Courtesy Slugggy Beats
@slugggybeats
slugggybeats.uk



"Bradford especially has had a big influence on me. The music, the people, and the culture there have definitely shaped me as an artist. There's so much creativity and raw talent in the area, and I've always felt inspired by that."

What are your first memories of music growing up? Did any of this feed into you being a producer?

Although no one in my family played instruments or produced music, I grew up in a very music-loving household. I spent a lot of time with my grandma, who always had music playing around the house or in the car - she'd often sing while cooking. My dad would do the same, playing music throughout the house or on long drives. Those moments exposed me to a wide range of genres from a young age. One day it might be ABBA's Dancing Queen with my grandma, the next God Save The Queen by the Sex Pistols with my dad, or the latest pop hits on the radio with my mum. I didn't really care about the genre, I just found it all fascinating and enjoyable. Looking back, that early exposure helped shape the producer I am today. It taught me to appreciate all styles of music and gave me a wide palette of influences to draw from.

Can you explain a bit of your production set-up and process? How do you go about starting a tune off and how long they take to polish?

My production setup early on was super basic, just a laptop and a pair of headphones. I did have a set of Yamaha HS5s, but they were in an untreated bedroom, so the sound wasn't exactly ideal. You can definitely hear that in my early work. It's rough around the edges, but I kind of like that. It has a rawness that adds character and vibe.

These days I'm a bit more spoilt for choice. I'm based at Tileyard North now, which has some amazing sounding rooms, and I've invested a lot into gear over the years. I probably don't even want to know how much I've spent, but honestly, if there's one thing I love spending money on, it's improving my craft.

As for how I start tunes, it's different every time. Sometimes an idea just hits me when I'm doing something random, like making a cup of tea or walking my dog. Other times I'll hear a track that inspires me and think, 'I need to try something like that.' If neither of those things happen, I'll just show up to the studio and start pushing buttons until something clicks. Some ideas never go

anywhere, some get finished and sound terrible, and others come together in under an hour and just feel right. Some take months but still work out in the end. Every track has its own process, but in my experience, the ones that come together quickly and naturally tend to be the best.

What is your relationship like with Bradford? How has the scene shaped you as an artist?

A lot of people assume I'm from Bradford because of the music I've made and the people I've collaborated with, but I'm actually from Wakefield, which is just down the road. It's close to a lot of places really, like Leeds, Huddersfield, and Bradford, which I think has actually been a benefit. Growing up in Wakefield, you end up hearing music from all these surrounding towns and cities, not just your own little scene.

Bradford especially has had a big influence on me. The music, the people, and the culture there have definitely shaped me as an artist. There's so much creativity and raw talent in the area, and I've always felt inspired by that.

What's the wildest thing that's happened to you as a result of music?

There are honestly too many moments to mention. My music career has allowed me to do things I never imagined I'd get the chance to do. One that stands out is playing a DJ set at a festival in front of over a thousand people. That was surreal.

I've also met and worked with people I never thought I'd even speak to. I've got a track with Jax Jones and D.O.D from over a year ago now, and it still doesn't feel real. I feel like I'm constantly being surprised and blessed with new opportunities, and I'm genuinely so grateful to be living this life. I can't thank the people who support me enough - they're the reason I get to do what I love every day.

The Underground

20 06 25

Curated By ZMARA克斯

9 Duke St, Bradford BD1 3QR

The final stop on the tour was the UK's 2025 City of Culture, Bradford. A former industrial powerhouse in the north currently undergoing a resurgence with local creatives and venue owners putting the city back on the map. The dosing party was curated by Bradford-born DJ, producer and audio-visual artist ZMARA克斯, founder of the permission-less grassroots DIY dub night Dissentients. Hosted by independent dub The Underground, the dosing party for the event series was an unmissable evening of experimental dance music, bassline and dubstep classics. 140BPM-specialist RUFUS! spun a signature mix of grime and bass, with Lloydfears showcasing his unique spoken word set of industrial sounds. Producer duo Yin Yang Boyz, known for the Bradford dub classic 'Gypsy Boy', brought the energy with a set of heart-pounding house, and talented young producer Stave backed them up with a selection of his own bassline productions. Boundary-defying R&B artist GLORIA put on a memorable live performance, and for the last time on the tour, project founder Mura Masa touched down to headline proceedings. A fitting end to an unreal tour of unsung heroes.

Poster design: ZMARA克斯

Photos: Yushy & Daniel Johnson Gray

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MURA MASA
PRESENTS

MURA MASA
ZMARAKS
STAVE
GLORIA
CLOYDFEARS
RUFUS!
YINYANGBOYZ

BRADFORD, THE UNDERGROUND
20TH JUNE 2025
9 TILL LATE

Freedom
w/ ZMARAKS

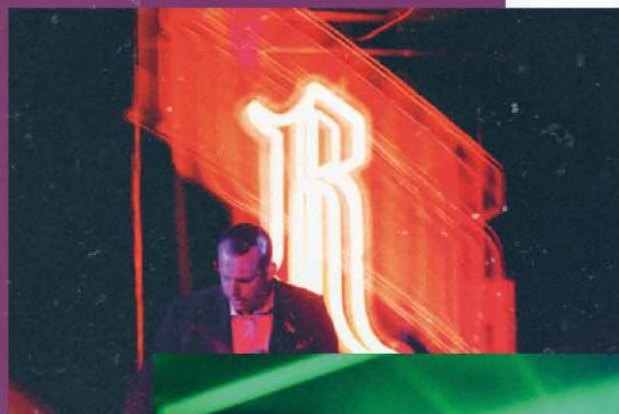




Where were you born & based ?	Bradford
When did you start making music?	Have been making music since the age of 11
What's your software/DAW of choice?	Logic
Do you have a particular process to making music?	Usually starts with beers
Roughly how long does it take for you to finish a track?	Sometimes hours sometimes weeks
How would you describe some of your recent musical output?	Experimental
How do you distribute your music?	Ditto and distrokid
What's the best way to approach other artists?	Directly
What is your relationship with social media?	Can't stand it but it's crucial
What is your opinion on record labels?	I have none
Who are some of your favourite current underground artists?	Quade poundsign, haze da Martian
Who are some of your dream collaborations?	Potter payper, fredagain
What is your biggest fear in making music?	Not getting enough coverage on a banger
What are some of the challenges you face as an artist?	Funding as an independent artist
Favourite things to do outside of music?	Travel
Best pubs/cafes/restaurants near where you live?	Cue gardens
What are some of your favourite films?	The business, dead man's shoes
Favourite place to escape to?	Thailand
One object you can't live without?	Phone unfortunately



YinYangBoyz



Mura Masa presents LOCAL Relentless
AL Relentless
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Where were you born and where are you based?

Born in Bradford; BD6. Been living in Europe since brexit got finalised.
Took that one a bit personal still.

How would you describe some of your recent musical output?

Pressurised Ambient for Kitchen Sink Drama if I'm doing up media training. But if ur just being chatty it's like a spoken word grime thing with a bit of industrial. Do u like Sketpa? Do u like Autechre? Yeh man, snm there u go that's it just in a northern accent

How do you distribute your music?

Bandcamp and Nina Protocol is sweet. I've always got more out of playing live than putting stuff out. Current set is mostly all unreleased, you gotta come to the show to hear the tune. Wandering Bard type beat

Do you have a particular process to making music?

I work mostly with samples; samples represent history and musical lineage, ideas and events that I appropriate. I run this through granular software that lets u break sound down into base frequencies and textures. I make long recordings of my affected source material and find loops that make me want to say something; loops can be the beat, the pulse or drums with an organic feel. Writing is harder but much more intuitive. I'm always collecting phrases from books, online comments and overheard chat and I put these into my voice. I very rarely write sat down, when I feel the urge to pace the room I know I might have something.

What is your relationship with social media?

Email me and I'll send you a postcard with my mailing list.
Send4lloydfeares@gmail.com

How does playing on the radio compare to the club?

Radio is practice hours. Presenting research, forging links, trying out new bars and generally doing some proper digging in the archives to provide good vibes. Live sets are a full contact sport with no compromise. It's hard work for us both but it's worth it.

What does community mean to you and your music?

Complicated. A lot of people very different to me seem surprised that what I say about myself also applies to them. We're all very individualised now and think our pain is ours alone. I think these kinds of people need to listen more. But I crave closeness with the audience and the people around me. The fact I'm having these conversations means things are changing.

What are some of the challenges you face as an artist?

The very sad reality that economics control everything. If there's not much money in it then it doesn't get my full attention cos the landlord is never too far away, I've found this in others also. The best art comes from a feeling of freedom and it's increasingly hard to find.

Favourite things to do outside of music?

Riding my bike, building things and cooking with great people

Best way to self-care/unwind?

I'm trying to get better at this.

Favourite place to escape to?

Big fan of a psycho-geography walk. Wandering round in the carcass of industry or spying good architecture bits.



Lloydfears



person's name
Mura Masa photo
LOCAL

Hailing from?

I was born in Haworth, still in Haworth!

When did you start making music?

I started making music around 14, I had piano lessons when I was 11 but didn't do much with it. I've always loved music, but no way has it "been my passion from a young age". 8 years I've been producing, I'm 22 now. I wouldn't say it was a passion when I started. I didn't know what I was doing...

What's your software/DAW of choice?

FL studio.

Do you have a particular process to making music?

A very long process that doesn't include much writing... it can stem from anywhere at anytime.

Roughly how long does it take for you to finish a track?

If I stuck at it and knew the direction of the song, hours. But if I don't have the right idea, it can take months.

How would you describe some of your recent musical output?

I recently got a lot of orchestral sounds so I've been trying to incorporate that into my normal dance tunes

How do you distribute your music?

Cygnus music. I used to use soundcloud distribution, not the best.

What's the best way to approach other artists?

They're just people, talk normally and send a message.

What is your relationship with social media?

My fan base is not vast and the algorithm is poor. I'd say We're complicated.

What is your opinion on record labels?

A very good shot at making something of yourself... But boy do they rinse you.

How does playing on the radio compare to the club?

Playing on the radio is no match to a club. Each have their own benefits.. the radio is to a much larger crowd. The club is where people are actually listening to the music

Who are some of your favourite current underground artists?

Arjo, Hans glader, scrüz

Who are some of your dream collaborations?

Jacob collier, Sammy Virji, disclosure

What does community mean to you and your music?

I see rise in popularity for garage, I'm glad people are starting to see the vibe. Being able to show people something gets them gassed is a good feeling. Seeing people who grow fond of it only makes the community bigger.

What is your biggest fear in making music?

Have I added too much spice to my plate

What are some of the challenges you face as an artist?

It's a tough game trying to make your stuff stand out. I'm still on the road to finding my sound. Like where it's at currently. Trying to find the right people in this industry is half the battle.

Favourite things to do outside of music?

I love walking, but of course AirPods come into play then. I work as well so I've got not much free time!

Favourite independent shops near where you live?

Co op is essential in my life

Best pubs/cafes/restaurants near where you live?

All the local places are pretty good, Haworth is a pretty place.

What are some of your favourite films?

WallE, edge of tomorrow, snatch.



Stave



What's your alias

RUFUS!

Where were you born and where are you based now

Born and bred in Bradford

When did you start making music

Started making music in 2006, I have always had an interest in music and started playing the drums and bass at around 11/12

What's your software/daw of choice

Ableton live

Do you have a particular process to music

Not particularly, I often start with an overall theme of what the tune signifies to me or how I want it to sound in my head then take it from there, May start with drums or a melody riff.

Roughly how long does it take for you to finish a track

it varies massively, sometimes I can finish a track in an hour others I can be working on for a few weeks.

How would you describe your music

Deepbass driven dubstep/140 but I do make other genres, there is an overall theme of unique audio design, techy rhythms, a heavy emphasis of ethereal and deep pads. I like to think that my music is very inclusive and not just for those who are into my particular niche.

What's your relationship with social media

I actually have a love hate relationship with social media, ive actually just come back from a few years from all of them, I do however realise in this day and age they are vital to getting your sounds out there and networking with other artists.

Who are some of your favourite current underground artists

It would have to be 'Surreal' from Huddersfield, although he is a close friend his music is unreal and he is such a talented producer, his audio design is unparalleled in the dubstep/140 scene. Also 'Slaine Op' from Manchester, im always hyped to get a new dub pack from him and you'll find many of his tracks in my dj sets. 'Katch' from Nottingham is another one I should mention, such clean production and unique audio design.

Favourite things to do outside music

I love to go hiking, mountain biking, and just being with my friends and family.

What are some of your favourite films

Synechdoche New York, Lord Of The Rings Trilogy, '28 Days Later' Any David Cronenberg, The Witch.

Are you a gamer?

Yes I Love to game and always have done since a child, started on a sega megadrive, I currently plan on a PS5 and playing kingdom Come 2 Deliverance which I absolutely love, I've already racked up a 130+ hours on it haha.

Favourite place to Escape to

My garden, me and my wife have such a lovely garden full of nature and I really enjoy to just sit out there, other than that it would be the woods by my house, or the many beautiful nature spots that surround Bradford.



RUFUS!



Mura Masa
LOCAL



class
CA

When did you start making music? Did you have an interest from young?

So I always loved garage music when I was young - like recording it off pirate radio and trying to sing along. I grew up with my house filled with gospel, soul and power ballads and I always tried to get my sisters to sing as a unison girl group. When I was 12 I started performing on Blackpool pier I loved it - your looking at blackpools Beyoncé here

How would you describe some of your recent musical output?

I think it's like metal - Sci Fi mb melted into metal

How do you distribute your music?

At the moment I'm not sure - I used to use ditto for platforms like Spotify but I'm liking centralising the artist in the process and platforms like Bandcamp do that for me

What's the best way to approach other artists?

Say hey —and club settings are a lot easier

What is your relationship with social media?

It's a toxic relationship

What is your biggest fear in making music?

It sounding shit

What are some of the challenges you face as an artist?

Finding an audience

Favourite things to do outside of music?

I'm an actor I transitioned 3 years ago I started training it's been great I've booked jobs such as mission impossible, the Witcher and more - so yeah I like it

What are some of your favourite films?

Arrival

Are you a reader? If so, what are some of your favourite books?

I'm currently reading children of blood and bone it's a vibe

Best way to self-care/unwind?

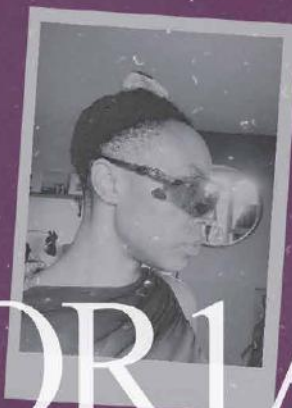
sauna sauna sauna

Favourite place to escape to?

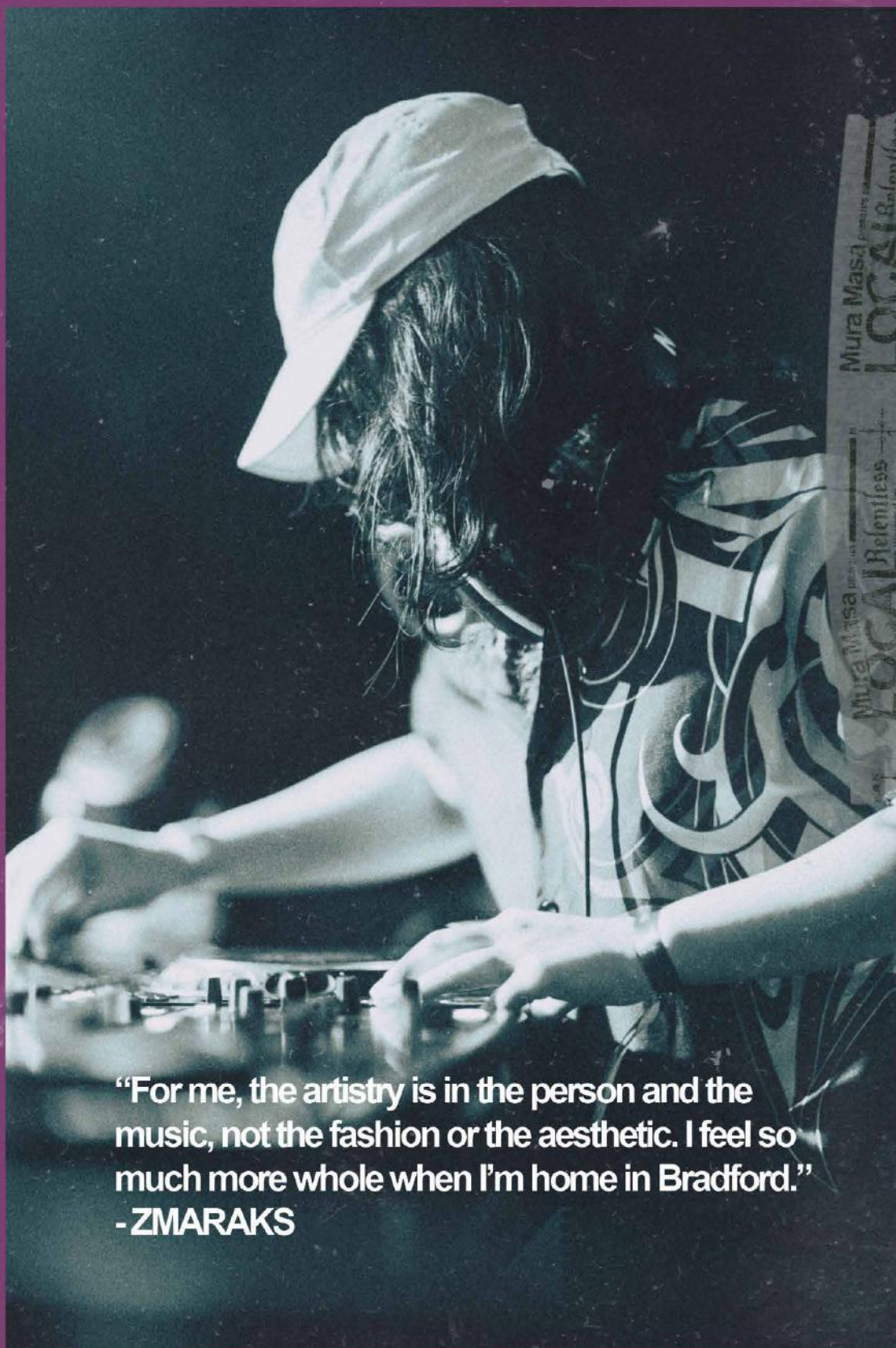
In a forest but I love the sea it's my happy place sitting on the beach and listening to the waves

One object you can't live without?

My silk pillow case lol



GLORIA



"For me, the artistry is in the person and the music, not the fashion or the aesthetic. I feel so much more whole when I'm home in Bradford."
- ZMARAKS



Boo
Mia Lily
ZMARAKS

N

cities



in



conversation



ZMARAKS:

Hey, how you doing? You good?

Boo:

Good thanks, how are you? How's this process for you?

ZMARAKS:

Not too bad! Nerves are cooking a bit, but all good. I'm kind of new to this club and curation stuff, like I've been doing quite a lot of DIY projects for a while, and so coming back home and bringing all my mates and the locals together for this has been interesting.

Boo:

Are you based in Bradford?

ZMARAKS:

I'm in between. Basically, I ran away from home. It had a lot to do with that sense of your dreams feeling too restricted where you are. I'm back and forth a lot seeing family and I have a few mates doing bits up north that I'm working on, but yeah, in between London and Bradford.

Boo:

I've tried multiple times in my life to move to London but just basically ran out of money because it's so hard to live there. It's so expensive. I stay with friends a lot in London because there's so much happening there. I hate to say it, but most of the meetings I've had or big jobs in music have been in London. It's like everything to do with my career has to be based in London. I live just outside Stockton, which is a small working-class town basically created for workers of the ICI which was this huge chemical plant sold off by Thatcher. So, as you can imagine, there's not much of a scene here, and London just feels so much more exciting in comparison. There

are barely even any small clubs still open here. When I had to choose a venue for this, I had to use a theatre.

ZMARAKS:

Yeah, I know what you mean. It's the same here, we've got bars but there's no real clubs pushing new sounds or trying to support artists. But yeah, I hear you on the London thing. I've lived here for a little while now, but there's so much on it almost feels oversaturated. Whenever I go to the north it feels so much purer, if you know what I mean? Like the sound and the audience feel a lot more connected to the music as opposed to the aesthetic of the music. There's a lot that happens in the capital which feels like a conflation of culture and music, and no one really knows where they belong. Whatever is popular at the time just get overpromoted. Whereas when you're in the shadow, no one really cares about what's popular. People just rep what they like and what makes them feel like they belong.

Boo:

Yeah, I know exactly what you mean about the power of being in the shadow.

ZMARAKS:

Yeah, man. That's how it feels to me. What was it like for you growing up in Stockton?

Boo:

To be honest, I don't think people would ever think this about me if they were watching me on stage, because I've grown to feel quite confident on stage, but my nature has always been to stay in the shadows. I don't like being the centre of the attention, so growing up somewhere in the shadows felt comforting to me. The chemical plant I told you about, I used to find so fascinating when I was a kid, especially at night in the winter when it's dark. There would be fire coming up from the cooling towers and all these lights that made it look alien and otherworldly. There was something about it that I just found deeply inspiring. We're called 'smoggies' here, because there's a big grey cloud that lingers over the town. A lot of people live below the poverty line here, but the smoke still comes out of these towers, and there was something about being against this grey backdrop that just felt really inspiring. I can't really explain it in any other way. There's not that much external stimulation around here because it's so quiet. There are little pockets of countryside and it's not busy like a city, so there's a lot of space for your brain to be untarnished by external issues going on around you. So yeah, growing up here made me feel like becoming an artist was a million miles away, but also so immediate because I had also this space to dream. What about you, what was Bradford like growing up?

ZMARAKS:

Really similar. Obviously, ours is also an industrial city. And a lot of the wealth of the UK came from places like ours, on the back of the working classes. And then there was deindustrialisation and austerity from Thatcher, and so there's so many abandoned, smashed up mills, which are just so beautiful to me. I just see these structures that hold so much life in them and so many ghosts, and they remind me to be still. We had the smoke too because there were so many factories here. That's all I used to see, and I didn't know it was bad for me, but it does inspire you. When there's so much mundanity you daydream more, because it gives you space to dream, and that gave me space to dream too. I felt like such an isolated, introverted weirdo, you know, wanting to be an artist. But

when you're South Asian, and come from a Muslim background, people look at you like, bro, what are you on? Like, what are you actually doing? It was really hard to see myself reflected in the world. But I just didn't care. It was more about just being inspired by the world and wanting to express and translate that further than just being an artist or playing music.

Boo:

You've expressed that perfectly. It's so similar, how mundane things are. I really do think that it gives you space to dream. And for me, I get very overstimulated, like, I'm really sensitive person. So in London I feel like it's quite hard for me to create because you step outside and there's constant noise, constant colours and millions of faces, which your brain has to process. And for me, I don't have the space left to create. But you didn't have the depth of music as you did in London. I got introduced to electronic music through being at the ice rink haha. It was all quite commercial but I loved Avicii. Like, the first time I heard 'Levels' I couldn't believe it, I'd never heard anything like it. And then I got into Crystal Castles and more niche stuff and started to collect records. So, I think the downside is that if you're growing up somewhere like London or Manchester, you get introduced to more genres from an early age.

ZMARAKS:

Yeah, it's that cultural richness that comes out of big cities that you don't have access to. But I feel like that cultivated a deeper, more nostalgic and emotional relationship to the music, because it was so rare, that feeling. It's so much more intimate than having immediate access, like what you're saying about the ice rink. For me, the artistry is in the person and the music, not in the fashion or the aesthetic. So, I feel so much more whole when I'm home, just chilling or hanging with my family feels so much more poetic as opposed to. Being in London and having to split my attention so many ways. There's so much opportunity here you feel like you're meant to be doing this or that, there's a pressure and you get vertigo because it can feel like trap. It's the Rumpelstiltskin thing of you might get what you want but it comes at a cost of not knowing who you are. I definitely prefer solitude. Even in London I'm trying to find the shadows.

Boo:

Whereabouts do you live in London? How do you find it there?

ZMARAKS:

I've lived here around six years and I've been in like 12 different homes. Obviously, I come from a working-class background on benefits, so it's been hard just constantly being displaced. In north London, I've been here two years now, it feels like the Yorkshire of London. Places like Wood Green and Tottenham feel more local and familial to me with the families here. Gentrification is coming but it's mostly hit south and east, so there is still that nostalgic feeling of community here. How about you when you lived here?

Boo:

I lived in Bayswater for a bit, which was manic. And I lived with a promoter friend for a while with her family, and I've lived a bit in east. But I think, like you, I'm introverted in nature so have always looked for the quieter areas and London was too much. If I ever move back, I want to find a way to be more connected to nature, and to run the nights I want to run in a more communal way. I run a night called Get Tech and it's just not working at home, or in cities

nearby like Newcastle. I'm just losing money. But when I brought it to London it worked, so I'm trying to find a way to balance it. Just trying to exist!

ZMARAKS:

Innit. Collecting the crumbs. I live and die by doing what I want to do. It's so hard.

Boo:

Yeah, it's difficult, and I don't want to struggle with it here, but I've done so many club nights and open deck events in my area, and tried to give people opportunities, but never been booked or paid properly in return. There comes a point when you've just got to take your energy somewhere else.

ZMARAKS:

Sometimes it's hard to spread the essence of where you come from, because you're not sure if it's going to make sense. People get comfortable in the sameness and what's being presented to you, and then when you present change, it's hard for people to digest that. Like, doing my music in Bradford, which has a strong sense of community and kindred natures, everyone's together and sort of become the same, so people are afraid to step out of the box. Provoking newness is hard. But I do enjoy that disruption. And it can be a butterfly effect, where someone might not like this but it might plant a seed in your mind about what's actually out there, instead of everyone being stuck in an echo chamber of what's comfortable to them.

Boo:

Yeah and I think I've accepted that I'm not going to change it all. It's too much responsibility and we shouldn't internalise that weight, because there needs to be structural change. We need more investment and more venues; we need educational programmes where people can learn to DJ. That sort of thing is so common in London. I learnt to DJ just watching Boiler Room sets, there was absolutely nothing. And still, people say to me, you should do more in your local area and try to build a crew, but I'm doing as much as I possibly can. When you're working class, you're playing life on the hard level. We don't have the same connections or resources.

ZMARAKS:

Yeah, there aint no nepotism in our ends. A lot of the club scenes round here have been purposely disrupted by the government, because a club scene is a place of congregation, right? And when you had austerity and race wars going on back in the day, the club scene was a threat to power because it brought people together and helped them connect and humanise. There's so much potential in music and art, and we need political and systematic support to help that change occur.



Boo:

Hey Mia! I'll start with you. How did you go about finding your artists for the Blackpool event?

Mia Lily:

I put a call out on my Instagram just to see who was out there and if any DJs, photographers or artists wanted to get involved. And then I also asked my friend Danny Howard to do a post and he spread the word as well. We just wanted to get the reach out as far as possible, to create as much of a diverse line-up as we could. I did a bit of digging online too and dug through people's profiles. What about you?

Boo:

Yeah haha I copied off you, because I saw that you did a post and I knew a few people from Teesside already, so I did an open call and copied your video format. I'm usually quite shy at doing things like that, but I thought it was the best place to reach people. Teesside's a smaller area though so it was difficult to find people, but I got sent a really good mix from Alousea, and I knew REES and Cousin Dan, and knew they were from similar backgrounds, so thought it would be good to give them an opportunity. It's been harder to find a photographer, I've emailed to different art colleges but nothing. You'd think there'd be lots of people coming forwards, but it's been a bit difficult.

Mia Lily:

Yeah, it's been hard to create a diverse line-up. I didn't really get many female DJs messaging me and there wasn't many people from POC or LGBTQIA+ communities. But I'm still really excited with the people we've got. We've got Pacemaker who's amazing, she plays a lot of hardcore, very sick at blending, and we've also got D-Foc and Hometones. It's going to be sick.

Boo:

Nice, yeah. I've got three as well, and they're all like kids which is good. I think it's been nice to give opportunities to working class people. I don't know about you, but when I started, I struggled to find opportunities in my areas. There are only one or two clubs in the actual town here, that's why we're doing it in a theatre, so I struggled to find places to play. What about you? Did you find that?

Mia Lily:

It's similar for me. I definitely haven't had many opportunities in Blackpool. It's obviously famous for tourism back in the day, and for its nightlife especially in the 90s, but over the years the clubs have been shutting down. When I first started raving, I used to go to this club called Syndicate and there were quite a few other places, but they're just not around as much now. You'd have to go to the next biggest city in Manchester or Liverpool. People come here for hen parties and stag dos, but for electronic music venues there's not much.

Boo:

In Stockton there's definitely more of an indie rock scene, but if I wasn't making electronic music, I just don't know how I'd have ever got a DJ, because there's just nothing here. BBC Introducing has been my lifeline, uploading music to them and getting spotted, it's been crucial.

Mia Lily:

I haven't lived in Blackpool for a while now, but most of my opportunines have come in London, which is frustrating. Do you remember when we first met at that pool club, and you asked me if I was a DJ?

Boo:

Yeah haha, I just had a good gut feeling about you, and my gut never lies, because we're best friends now.

Mia Lily:

Which is weird, because I didn't have anything to say I was a DJ at that time, so it felt a bit like fate. The first time I played an open decks night was one that you put on.

Boo:

I remember it really clearly. And it sounds so lame, but it's like I'd already met you. You felt very familiar.

Mia Lily:

I remember being very drawn to you as well. But at that open decks night, I met a bunch of people, went to a few more and then the rest is history. I met tons of people through your event in London who I've stayed in touch with, but I'm not sure I'd have had those opportunities if I'd have stayed in Blackpool.

Boo:

The thing is with London, there's an infrastructure and funding platform already there, and so if you want to DJ and build a portfolio on small local radio stations, you can. And it's the same with the club nights. There's so many, right? But you just don't have that in Stockton, which is why all the creatives leave, other than the ones who aren't able to, and so they just get normal jobs. It's a barrier to access. So location is one thing and being working class is another - if you can't move, and don't have the money, what can you do?

Share your music on social media and hope it goes viral? There needs to be more funding for smaller cities and towns.

Mia Lily:

It's difficult, because I know we both don't like being on social media that much, and don't want to feel like we have to share our faces everywhere, but it's like creating that sort of content now is essential to being an artist and getting discovered. You just have to be online so much more. Do you feel connected to your city? Are there strong communities there?

Boo:

Stockton is a small town, and all my family's here, so I'm always going to feel connected to it, but it's a hard place. I remember driving past the big chemical plant and hearing stories about my dad working there. There's not a lot here, and there's a lot of drugs and halfway houses and crime, but it's also beautiful. There's a sense of people working together. My mum's neighbours take her bins out for her, and they don't expect anything in return. During lockdown I hired a small office where I could put my decks and production equipment and it was less than £100 a month. For someone in London that's unheard of, so there's benefits in that sense. My local authority has done something really progressive too. They're giving five artists a living wage and grants and business advice, and I'm lucky enough to have been selected as one of them, so I do feel fortunate. Without that I don't know what else I'd do, because I feel like this is the only thing I'm good at.

Mia Lily:

That's not true, you're amazing at lots of different things, but it is good that they're giving you the opportunity to put your heart and soul into something. I guess the difference between coming from a working-class background and a background with money, is you just don't have the security to fall back on. It makes such a big difference, I'm living in London now but working a full-time job and trying to do music as well, so from Monday to Friday, along with all the travelling, it's hard to find the time, except from at weekends. But then that's how burn-out happens. I miss spending time with my friends and having time to self-care, and I feel like that's easier if you're not from a working-class background. We're constantly trying to make things work, and make ends meet.

Boo:

Yeah, you're juggling two jobs essentially.

Mia Lily:

And then on top of that, when do I find time to produce and write music? Because that's what I really want to be doing, you know?

Boo:

I think what is important is that we can talk about these things and support each other. It makes such a difference to be able to speak with people from similar backgrounds, because I realised the other day, that have been times when I feel embarrassed, which maybe isn't the right word, about my background.

I love my parents so much and I love where I'm from, and I'm actually so proud of being working-class, but I have felt shame around it. I read something last year that said when you're poor, it's like you're playing life on hard mode, and everything just seemed to click in my head, it was like, oh, I'm not just behind in my life. It took



me like five years to get to where I am in the industry, which isn't very far, but it doesn't have to take that long. It's also about being a woman in this industry, and the lack of opportunities there. We're made to feel like we have a time limit, if we want to start a family and we don't have an infinite amount of time. I carry that around with me every day of my life. It informs all of my decisions. So, it's quite an intense thing, and the point we're at in our lives, we want to really go for it, but at the same time, is it possible to do both?

Mia Lily:

Yeah, I've seen more and more women having families and still being able to DJ, and it's just such a massive inspiration. It's like if they can do it, we can do it too. But it's hard to balance everything.

Boo:

Yes! Definitely. I have met a few people though who have sort of cosplayed as working-class in the industry, which feels very misleading. Like we compare ourselves to each other, but it's important to be transparent about where we've come from, because it's hard enough as it is. We need more working-class role models in these positions that we can believe in. It costs money to buy decks and records and Ableton and laptop and headphones. It's a huge investment, so we need people who can prove it's worth the risk.

Mia Lily:

Yeah totally. It's because there's no visibility. Like, I remember this guy in a club once asking me if I came from money, which completely shocked me. If you're woman there's a visibility of that, but with working-class communities you just don't see it.

Boo:

I had the same! A nepo baby allegation haha, which is mad because I spent my childhood on my grandparent's council estate. But I think it's because we're afraid to talk about it. I'm so scared about being labelled as anything other than Boo, or revealing it, that I haven't actually spoken openly about it much, but it's so important to, which is why conversations like these need to happen.





'Local'

#TG0026

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s/o all who made this happen

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Boo

Mia Lily

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No-ID

Charlotte Jaeger

Alexander Crossan

Harry Grove

All the performers, photographers & attendees

That sound ticket inspector for not fining me

& That kind concierge (@ The Loonardo Hotel for giving us a free pot noodle

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