

# Guild

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**East Street Arts**

**2018 – 2023**

**Arts Council England Sector Support Organisation**

**Final Evaluation & Impact Report**

**Guild Publication**

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# Foreword

by Karen Watson

Guild is a large-scale project, developed by East Street Arts, that was initially made possible by Arts Council England's Sector Support fund, in 2018. The ethos of Guild, however, had been anticipated in our work for over 20 years.

Myself [Karen Watson] and Jon's [Jon Wakeman] own journey, recognising the need for a better infrastructure that supports visual artists, has found us, 30 years later, at the centre of an artist support charity that, no matter how embedded in the artist-led movement, continually asks what an artist space is, why it is important and how it plays a vital role in our artistic ecosystem.

Over the course of six to seven years we gathered intelligence, networked with artists and collectives, visited artistic spaces across the UK and Europe and participated in national networks and debates - listening to the needs of artists. The result of which was finding a permanent home for artists in Patrick Studios, 2004. Once secured, Patrick Studios gave the organisation, and the artists it housed, security in their practice and great visibility within, and outside of, the arts sector, attracting more opportunities and resources.

As the charity developed, it continued to position itself in conversations with artists, artistic spaces and growing local authorities. Beyond Leeds, East Street Arts was invited to share experiences with a wide range of ambitious and dynamic spaces. The discussed topics of interest often included: building stronger organisations, accessing resources, securing spaces and nurturing artists in their development and how they engage participants in quality artistic work. This work was formalised in 2018, and East Street Arts founded the Guild programme. Guild was developed to be the conduit between our knowledge, our network and the needs of artists across England. We recognised a gap in sector understanding

when defining what an artist space is, how it can exist and develop sustainably, and the important role it plays in artists' networks, artists' careers and even local developments - whilst making visible the amazing, dedicated and innovative ways of thinking and working that was happening across the country in artist-led spaces.

The Guild project advocated for policy making that was inclusive of artist-led spaces and their voices. Our research, therefore, focussed on creating a dynamic partnership of support with a national reach, inviting many artist spaces to learn from each other. However, within 18 months of the project, the COVID-19 pandemic created obstacles in how we connected and in some cases threatened the existence of many artist-led spaces. With support from Arts Council England, we were able to be responsive and agile, offering emergency support to as many artists and artists spaces as possible... many of whom did not qualify for help from the government.

The impact of the pandemic, on the sector, highlighted the fragility of the practitioners and spaces that underpin the entire arts ecology. As a result, the effects of COVID-19 dominate this programme throughout.

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**“Guild was developed to be the conduit between our knowledge, our network and the needs of artists across England.”**

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## Some of the key questions to come out of this support programme are:

- **How do universities better collaborate with smaller, less resourced, artistic spaces within their towns and cities to support recent graduates, professionally and pastorally, in gaining industry experience and sector knowledge to practise sustainably - when, for example, navigating their first solo exhibition?**
- **Should larger arts organisations offer professional and experienced support to smaller artistic spaces in nurturing the development of the artists they will inevitably work with?**
- **Do Arts Council England need to hold themselves accountable, and take responsibility, for the care of grassroots artists and artistic spaces - in contrast to how the football Premier League fails to support lower leagues in a**
- **Is there an obligation for local authorities, QUANGOs (quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisation) and other development funders to consider the positive impact artists and artistic spaces have in the development of a city? And, should their development strategies be inclusive of this?**

As the Guild project comes to an end, we reflect on the above questions that shaped the support programme and the achievements of such work that has, resiliently, adjusted and readjusted to support artists and artistic spaces over the last five years. In truth, however, when uncovering the importance of these relationships and their essential difference in sustaining the artist-led sector... the surface has only been scratched.

You will find artistic spaces in most towns and cities across the UK, with new ones emerging every year to fill the gaps in provision for artists, their peers and for their locality. Change happens when we get better at sharing, supporting, caring and promoting each other. However, without strategic bodies recognising the importance of these spaces, and taking more responsibility to support them, development will be slow and they will continue to be vastly under-resourced. As I prepare to leave East Street Arts, after 30 years, I reflect on what projects such as Guild can achieve, and how they will develop moving forward. The organisation has a great team, dedicated to building

their understanding of both how our support can be relevant and appropriate, but just as importantly, how we can continue to influence the influencers and decision-makers.

I feel we are on track with tackling and exposing topics such as free labour continuing to prop up artist spaces, the conditions of student and graduate professional support, and what resilience really means for the artist-led sector. Nevertheless, without artists and collectives being able to access our spaces and our work, we cannot make use of their experiences, or achieve meaningful change. And, I encourage them to, please, keep talking to us.

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Karen Watson - Artistic Director, East Street Arts

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# Foreword

by Kate West

I joined the Guild team back in February 2021 when the world was only just beginning to emerge from a global pandemic. This created a sense of excitement amongst the programme delivery team and the cohort - with plans to reconvene a vital support programme promised to them back in 2018.

This role was somewhat of a change for me, having delivered exhibitions and public programmes for galleries and festivals, and I had begun to feel jaded by the sector and my influence on it. This coupled with some challenges in my personal life meant I was eager to instigate change, not only for myself but the artists I worked with, I had ambitions to provide support way before an artist reached the exhibition stage.

This, however, was not my first experience in challenging the status quo; I had set up my own artist-led space, Hack & Host, with two peers in 2014. Recognising a lack of contemporary engagement in Kingston upon Hull, we programmed events, campaigns and talks for artists with an activist approach to their practice. We supported a cohort of 10 graduates pushing them to seek networks beyond their home city.

However in 2018, after being in high demand throughout 2017 Hull City of Culture year, and with a precarious governance structure which meant we had to pay a large tax bill having not earned a penny ourselves, we made the difficult decision to dissolve the company. A decision that still weighs heavy.

Working on Guild I have come to realise a lot of the struggles we faced with Hack & Host were not unfamiliar to most artist-led spaces. We felt alone and in some sense, a level of shame in the failure we experienced. Had we been part of a peer support programme like Guild we may not have come to such a drastic decision.

Getting to know the cohort has been insightful, with each member experiencing similar barriers to progression but unique in their process, remit and plans. I have been able to see the incredible work these spaces do on a daily basis, proving fundamental support for artists in the UK, without whom the entire arts ecology would collapse. They are wildly underfunded and operating in very precarious situations. I'm always shocked by the tenacity in which they continue, this drive to look after other artists often to the detriment of their own personal career progression.

I have at times found myself feeling a little helpless to the cohorts requests, with such a large group and competing needs it's been difficult to act equitably and personally. When I joined the team, Guild needed a level of stability and the only way this could be achieved was by formalising some of our support systems. In doing so, we gave control back to the spaces - encouraging them to a more self-directed learning model. This allowed the team, which had experienced some instability to regroup and refocus.

I am a huge advocate of peer support and as mentioned previously it would have saved my own artist-led space. This objective has been impacted by the pandemic, forcing a lot of connectivity to take place online. Initiatives such as Guild Hall, Virtual Studio Swaps and the WhatsApp group were implemented as solutions to this unforeseen hurdle, however coming together for the Guild residency in summer 2022 I could see how in-person interaction could not be replaced and if the four days we spent together could have been replicated throughout the entirety of the project then we would have a much stronger cohort with the potential for long-lasting connections.

It has been interesting to work on sector research campaigns, this was always a big part of Guild's remit, however its visibility and impact was not always felt by the cohort. However in doing this work we (East Street Arts) are acting as advocates for this part of the sector with little to no voice.

**In conducting this research, the aim is to lobby stakeholders, funders and policy developers to understand the needs of artist-led spaces and implement changes which will impact their sustainability.**

As we close the door on Guild, I'm proud of this work East Street Arts has started. I use the word 'started' because it feels like the tip of the iceberg and we have ambitions to continue chipping away. Even though Guild will cease to exist as we know it, our support for these spaces will remain and we will continue to shine a light on injustices within this sector. I hope in years to come this programme and this publication are seen as an example of the catalyst for change within artist-led spaces sector support.

Kate West - Senior Producer, Guild

# Statement

by researcher Dr. Benedetta d’Ettorre

In 2018, I received a scholarship from the University of Leeds to research areas that included some of Guild’s activities and outputs. My research specifically focused on the meaning of sustainability for organisations run by artists. I have maintained a relationship with Guild since its inception and four years later, in October 2022, I was commissioned to work on this publication. This long relationship has enabled me to become a ‘critical friend’ of Guild. This title can be contested and debated, how can one be a critical friend? How do I get close enough but maintain a critical distance? Well, I feel that I have become one through my experience working on Guild first as a researcher and then as an evaluator.

My interest in the motivations that drive artists to set up organisations led me to directly research organisations within the Guild cohort, but not Guild itself. As a researcher, I wanted to maintain distance from the programme and keep integrity to safeguard the independence of my research. Now, I find myself in a unique position to contribute to this publication, as it is unusual for a project to be accompanied by a researcher/evaluator from the beginning to the end.

Other expert evaluators would be able to capture the impact of Guild on the cohort and evaluate its weaknesses and strengths. However, I believe that the sustained engagement with Guild, and the insights from my doctoral research, allow me to have a deeper understanding of the cohort beyond this immediate context. I remember conversations and recorded interviews between 2018-2020 with the Guild cohort that spoke of their doubts, questions and ambitions. Throughout the years, I was able to follow the groups’ development - I kept my distance and got some updates from the Guild team while

I wrote my thesis up. My doctoral research maps the position in which the organisations were pre-pandemic so, while I kept being connected to the project, I did not formally research and include the last three years of the project in the thesis.

My formal research work and my informal connection to the programme are key to grounding my current work as an evaluator of the project. On one hand, I am able to grasp the significance of small victories and big changes for the Guild groups - researching the last stages of the programme has provided me with invaluable insights into the value and limitations of my PhD research on the sustainability of artist-led spaces. On the other hand, I witnessed first-hand the different phases of the project.

**Through the research for this publication, I gained a better knowledge of Guild, as a Sector Support Organisation, its inner workings, and aspects of their work that lack visibility and made me question what it means to put together a programme that can support the sector.**

As much as I tried to keep some distance from Guild, I have been engaged with the project since its very beginning. It meant that, for sure, I was closer to the project than I thought. Thus, I decided that I needed support in this process and I have invited the Guild team to engage with the FailSpace framework to have another external perspective. This framework supported a structured, reflective, and objective evaluation of Guild’s objectives by its team and me.

I consider myself a friend of Guild because I am passionate about supporting artists

and artists’ organisations. My goal is to understand its success and failure in contributing to a more sustainable cultural ecology. I believe we can only move forward by understanding what works and what does not and learn through these evaluations. I have also witnessed the development of East Street Arts itself, Guild’s mothership, as an embedded researcher. East Street Arts is an artist-led organisation at its roots and shares some of the same successes, failures, and changes as the Guild cohort. As a larger organisation, it inspired me to think more broadly about organisational structures and relationships. This provided invaluable professional and personal learning, which is important for sharing. My hope for this publication - alongside further exchange of learning by Guild through resources such as this, the upcoming conference, and continued work of East Street Arts to support artists - is that it can make a meaningful contribution in this field.

Dr. Bendetta d’Ettorre - School of Performance and Cultural Industries, University of Leeds



# How to use this publication



Haarlem Artspace Studios © Will Slater

This publication contextualises and documents Guild's: approach, programme of activity, collaborations and research, legacy and next steps. All activity is presented in chronological order and labelled by the programme year in which it happened. Please see the below key for reference.

Each piece of Guild activity, throughout the publication, is labelled with the programme year in which it happened.

For example: If a piece of research took place during the programme year 2020 - 2021, this will be labelled Y3 as it took place within programme year 3.

If this research took place during the programme years 2020 - 2023, this will be labelled Y3-5 as it took place within programme years 3,4 and 5.

2018 - 2019 (Programme year 1)	<b>Y1</b>
2019 - 2020 (Programme year 2)	<b>Y2</b>
2020 - 2021 (Programme year 3)	<b>Y3</b>
2021 - 2022 (Programme year 4)	<b>Y4</b>
2022 - 2023 (Programme year 5)	<b>Y5</b>
2018 - 2023 (Throughout)	<b>Y1 - Y5</b>

This publication covers five years (2018 - 2023) of the Guild project activity - a Sector Support Organisation (SSO) funded by Arts Council England. Guild recruited a cohort of 25 artist groups to engage in a programme of support for their development, sustainability and resilience.

Each activity has a short introduction, explaining its rationale and impact through case studies and stories. The data collected during the programme has been visualised throughout, before the penultimate evaluation of the project. The intention of this publication is to replicate Guild's framework for general and bespoke learning, and is designed to be used as a tool to facilitate reflection and self-led learning.

**Throughout the publication you will find provocations (think, look and write) meant to inspire the reader to think about how networks are formed and how varying funding and activity can inform development.**

The evaluation provides practical recommendations and suggestions on how to inform future development, funding and activities. The legacy of the programme is explored through the formation of an alumni network and the piloting of a conference that we hope will continue bi-annually and be used by the sector as a point of reference.

This publication is based on the data collected and reviewed from the last six months of the support programme. Quantitative and qualitative data are extracted from documents produced internally, such as budgets, activity plans and monitoring, and shared externally, through press releases, reports, blog

and news articles, both by the cohort and the Guild team. Additionally, the publication includes the cohort's feedback surveys, 12 in-depth independent interviews of cohort members and written feedback from stakeholders. The publication has also benefited from sustained engagement from PhD researcher Benedetta d'Ettore, who has worked on the piece since inception and informed, with a deeper understanding, how the pandemic has affected the programme and the development journey of the cohort members.



# 1. Guild: Introduction

Guild was established as an Arts Council England Sector Support Organisation as an ambitious extension of the work East Street Arts had been leading on through their support of artists and artist-led spaces, for many years before.

**For 30 years, East Street Arts has built a property portfolio that spans the length and breadth of the country, providing artistic workspaces, artist studios, exhibition venues and community art hubs. The motivation behind this work is expansive, with a universal goal of wanting to make space for artists. Finding and facilitating artists to occupy these spaces, working closely with them to support their activities, dreams and ambitions, facilitating professional and peer support, and brokering important relationships are all prioritised activities when making space for artists.**

East Street Arts has a focus in Leeds, because of their knowledge of the surrounding area, but their reach is not limited and extends beyond to the rest of the country. They directly support organisations and artists around the north of England and have become a reference point for this part of the country, having built a reputation through their work over the years. The organisation is recognised as a key leader in the arts sector, acknowledgement of which is evidenced in their continuously awarded Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) status. Alongside other NPOs, there

is a collective responsibility to protect and develop the national arts and cultural ecology. The organisation has built ties around the UK and internationally, connecting with artists and organisations, observing different strategic models, ways of learning and connecting.

First hand experience working in the artist-led sector exposed a variety of challenges that, historically, self-organised spaces face repeatedly: being under-resourced and prone to burnout. The development of these spaces is often time-sensitive, as they face rapid growth in some communities, and crippling austerity measures in others. They are under constant threat of funding and budget cuts, changes to business rates, legislation for their use and property development schemes. Guild was born in response to these barriers, to create a programme of support dedicated to artist spaces and collectives.

Guild is a medieval term, used to describe an association of artisans and craft merchants who at that time would advocate for each other to promote the economic interests of their members and provide protection and mutual aid. Hence the project title, Guild. The aim of this programme, like the name suggests, was to curate a group of artists, collectives, and organisations from across England to network, share learning, support each other's development and collectively practise in a sustainable way.

However, as a Sector Support Organisation, Guild pioneers by filling a gap in the sector, specifically positioning itself to represent artist-led organisations, in collaboration with other organisations, that have specific remits. For example, supporting individual artist networks of disabled artists or artists from underrepresented communities.





## 2. Guild: Approach

### Arts Council England Sector Support Organisation application objectives:

- Deliver a bespoke, pick-and-mix accelerator business programme that will affect the practice of 10,000 artists.
- Launch a unique, sector-specific, asset-based toolkit that will enable us to cascade the learning and help to inform local authorities and other stakeholders.
- Increase understanding and share intelligence in artists' business models that operate within non-arts sectors.
- Strengthen visual and live art partnerships in order to reduce duplication, pool resources and expertise, and give unification to the sector voice.
- Embed research, advocacy and knowledge exchange to develop clear and reasonable recommendations for local and national stakeholders.
- Work with 10 universities/colleges to take learning into graduate art courses and influence professional support modules.
- Directly support 10 spaces through access to resources.
- Implement an evaluation programme that will give us unique intelligence and facilitate better sharing of good practice.
- Assess, identify and prepare for demand and need post-2021/22.

### Guild cohort: Application process and data

Initiating the UK's first artist-led spaces development programme in 2019 was in part both exciting and daunting - ensuring we meet the needs of this drastically under-resourced part of our sector and doing so in a seamless way was a huge task.

We selected the cohort through an application process with an external panel made up of peers, contributors and funders. The applications were discussed, over a two-day period, using the following criteria as prompts:

- Potential and scope for development of the workspace or group
- Articulation of needs - what they perceive to be their biggest challenges and their identified aims
- Innovative approach to addressing development needs
- Geographical spread
- Potential benefit the group has to their local area and the commitment to embedding the group in the locality

The remit was studio groups and artists' workspaces or collaboratives working in the visual arts nationally. The idea was to create an adjustable service that ensured it responded to the groups' needs and capacity from new, small and emerging organisations to more established enterprises.

It was initially articulated that the 20 selected groups would receive a tailored bespoke support service to help them become resilient and sustainable.

It would include:

- Developing a business plan
- Securing funds for physical and organisational development

- Devising strategies and action plans to embed the groups firmly in their localities
- Developing networks and contacts wider than just the arts sector
- Masterclasses
- Networking opportunities for the groups
- Mentoring tailored to their specific needs
- Guidance and support when making contacts within non-arts sector (local authority processes, private developers, finance raising, audience development and local community buy-in)
- Site visits and research trips within the UK and Europe

We received 97 applications from spaces up and down the country, although all unique in their remit, approach and audience they shared some commonality in their barriers to progression:

35%

Precarious building or rent security

21%

Support to build a board governance/organisational structure

21%

Not accessing regular public Arts Council England funding

35%

Support in business planning

22%

Staff burn-out

21%

Need to generate/diversify income streams

## Some memorable quotes from the application process are:

*"Currently, fatigue of management has become a key issue; extensive voluntary working and multiple projects at once has clearly had an impact on our effectiveness and motivation recently." - Assembly House*

*"Our commitment to keeping rent as low as possible makes our business model precarious. Although we increased our rent last year, in order to bolster our contingency funds, we still feel we may be vulnerable to sudden financial change. We feel we would benefit from further advice and ideas on creating a dynamic financial model that can weather various storms." - Bon Volks*

*"We formed very organically and operate in a very DIY way so we lack any real programme of organisational and structural development. It would be useful to have support in developing procedures and practices to increase smooth running of things. Along a similar line we would welcome support dealing with legal issues such as licensing, business rates, insurances etc." - Fish Factory*

*"We are a small community interest company with limited income. All three Directors have other demands on their time including; maintaining and developing a creative practice and undertaking freelance contracts or managing full time jobs to earn an income." - Navigator North*

This high volume of very strong applications only confirmed our thoughts about artists operating these spaces in isolation with limited opportunity to share or pool resources. It was difficult to select from such deserving spaces who desperately needed guidance and a community of support.

The application form, used by participants to partake in the Guild project, asked

applicants to self-identify the barriers they recognised as a threat to their sustainability. (shown overleaf)

The initial planning stages for the Guild support and training programme were responsive to the needs of the cohort, using the information outlined in their applications and the collected findings of the Guild team as they visited the different spaces during 'away days'. This information was used to map the development of the training sessions during the master classes and online Guild Conversations that were delivered to all groups. Individually funded mentoring and self-led development activities complemented the training programme. These activities took a loose-tight approach - setting tight enough boundaries to incentivise the groups to work within a precise time frame, but flexible enough to allow for individual needs and changes in ideas that happen over time.



Guild Induction Day, 2019 © Ndrika Anyika

- 50% of the 99 applications submitted highlighted the uncertainty around temporary leases in the buildings they occupied and the burnout of Team members due to unpaid labour, a lack of resources and limited capacity.
- Over 20% of applications reported obstacles in establishing effective governance and organisational structures, peer networking, skill sharing and mentoring programmes. Fostering partnership opportunities with private donors, local authorities and other organisations, and lack of financial stability, were noted second.

- Almost all applications reported challenges in improving accessibility, due to the environmental barriers of their buildings and spaces, and a lack of resources available for both capital development and the support needed to improve the equality, diversity and inclusion of our public workforce.

Using your own work as a case study – when reading this publication, think about whether a programme such as Guild would benefit your work? How?



Make a list of the ways in which you and other artist-led spaces can be supported in your work?





## 3. Guild: Programme of activity



Lynn Bailey, Double Elephant Print Workshop © Jim Wileman

### Guild cohort: Introduction masterclass at East Street Arts, Leeds

Y1

This five-year development programme began with an introductory day at East Street Arts, bringing together the cohort for the first time. The (then) Guild team, artistic directors and staff members welcomed the (then) 20 artist-led spaces to Patrick Studios, the home of East Street Arts, inviting them also to tour the newly acquired Convention House and Art Hostel. Talks from Kamiel Verschuren: B.a.d Foundation, Laurie Cummins: Art House Wakefield and Stockholm Environment Institute made for an interesting few days, discussing aspirations for the future and the potential in engaging with the Guild programme.

A second masterclass residency was planned to take place in Blackpool with cohort member, and co-host, Abingdon Studios. Themes to be explored were centred around Leadership (exploring professional development, team management and motivation) and the exploration of creative spaces in Blackpool, including the Art BnB, to understand the pitfalls and issues found in project management. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic this did not take place.

### Visiting the Guild cohort, multiple UK destinations

Y2

Within the first six months, East Street Arts (the Guild team, senior management team and artistic directors) set out to see all 20 artist-led spaces and conduct site visits that would help them in visualising where the cohort members were operating, who was in their locality, what stakeholders they have and how this programme can help them to become more resilient. Prior to the visit, the cohort were asked to carry out some homework - a webinar facilitated by East Street Arts' artistic directors that took the cohort through the process of creating a business canvas. They were asked to think about the social value and business case for their spaces and their vision for the next five years. Visioning sessions with the cohort, at their spaces, helped map some vital information around obstacles, growth, support structures and success measures. The team were able to carry out on average two visits per member, before the COVID-19 pandemic prevented them from completing this aspect of the programme.

## 3.1 The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

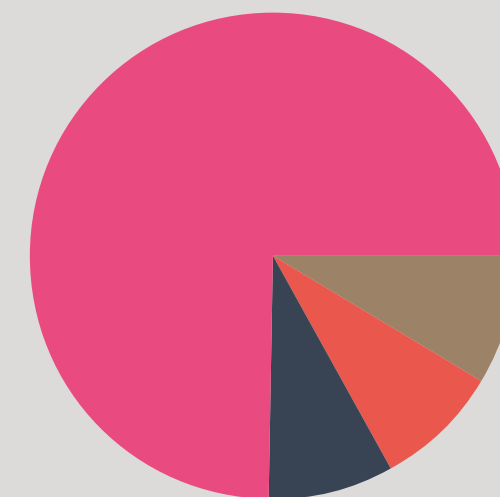
### COVID-19 support programme

Y3

Whilst East Street Arts and the Guild team planned and risk assessed the delivery of the project, they did not foresee the global pandemic that disrupted over 50% of the four year support programme. The team, who were operating at a reduced capacity, quickly responded to the obstacles of the pandemic and created a package of support for the 20 artist-led spaces - people and places they felt professionally and emotionally responsible for. They conducted SWOT sessions, helping each cohort member to look at their organisational COVID-19 response plan and the impact it would have on their yearly programmes, finances, personal objectives, risk registers and

emergency principals. Additionally, they ran an ACE (Arts Council England) Emergency Funding Webinar, to help the Guild cohort in accessing the emergency funding available, and commissioned case studies to be carried out, assessing the impact of COVID-19 on the Guild members for wider sector research. During this time, they also provided hands-on pastoral care for the artists running these spaces.

### Have you felt supported by East Street Arts throughout COVID-19?



- Yes, at certain points.
- Really supportive staff but some information drip fed or unclear, slowing down the process.
- Yes, but in a limited way given the challenges we've all faced.
- Undecided



## Accelerate

Y3

The pandemic allowed the Guild team to step back, reflect and reassess the support provided to the selected 20 artist-led spaces. They began to interrogate how representative the current cohort was, and if there had been any **access barriers** that could now be rectified to ensure the program was inclusive of organisations from further diverse backgrounds.

**Accelerate, a fast track program that targeted emerging groups and collectives, was developed with a focus on removing the barriers that cohort members with protected characteristics faced when engaging with the artist-led sector. This was a bespoke professional development program. The selected participating collectives were:**

**Mawfa (Leeds), Grief Series (Leeds), Broccoli Arts (London), Babeworld 3000 (London), and Contemporary Other (Birmingham).**

The development programme, conceived of focus groups with diverse artists and consultants Season Butler and Pauline Mayers, looked at bespoke business development, mental health and wellbeing support, and commissioning opportunities.

After the year's programme, the Guild team made the decision to continue to support these Accelerate groups in combination with the cohort.

*"It was a no-brainer, we already had an established relationship with East Street that we were really keen to continue developing and we were at a stage of organisational development where we needed support. We needed brain space to think about how to move forward in a sustainable way. We don't have a very strong board. ESA has been useful for outsourcing some of that support that we don't currently have on our board." - Mafwa*

*And we didn't really have any of the structure or the time. We haven't had time to reflect. We were just firmly stuck on that project funding treadmill that a lot of artists find themselves on. And so, Guild felt really formative and helped us to try and step off that treadmill for long enough to be able to put some new systems in place and become more robust as a collective." - Grief Series*

## Guild Hall

Y1 - Y5

As the cohort were unable to take part in the full masterclass residency programme, this prevented them from building long lasting connections with each other, which is why a **virtual peer support session was initiated**. These sessions, increasingly led by the cohort, focused on themes important to them at that time, asking each other for advice, seeking support from the Guild team and inviting guest speakers with specialist knowledge in the chosen area. Sessions included Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation application support, business plan writing, and an advice surgery on buying buildings. The sessions also allowed the delivery team to discuss plans for future support programmes, ensuring **feedback from the cohort was considered when planning each year's activities**.

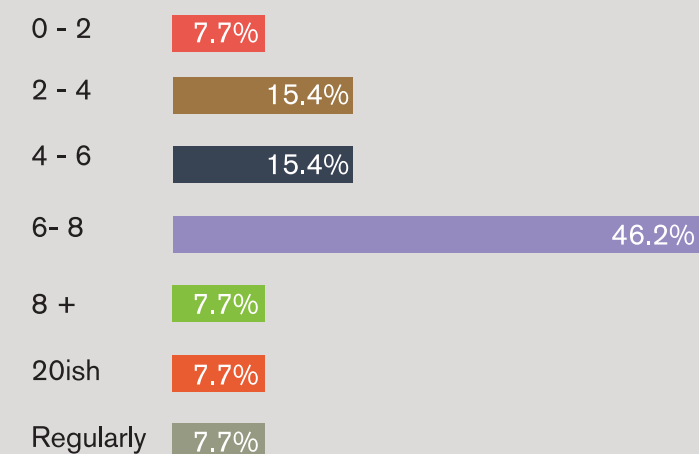
## 3.2 Digital commissions & virtual residencies

As part of the original Arts Council England Sector Support Organisation application, Guild committed to the delivery of an **artist resource page** that would live on East Street Arts' website - a key output that would curate, and make accessible, the vast amounts of knowledge collected over the five-year programme. The Guild Conversations, a programme of online talks, training sessions and workshops that were delivered by external artists, practitioners, experts and members of the Guild cohort, are just one example of the resources to be made available. Other resources were commissioned with specific practitioners to improve **peer-knowledge sharing**. Within the framework of creating the resource page, and having identified a need for the participating groups to review their online presence, we commissioned the cohort to conduct studies that looked at **archiving and digital presentation through a process-focussed virtual residency**. The residency did not ask for a specific output from the groups, but did require them to produce one deliverable that would sit on the East Street Arts resource page, contributing and sharing

the findings of their research.

Groups could apply for a fee up to £1,500. Their application had to outline: the focus and aims of the project, who was going to be involved, a timeline for the work, a general idea of what the output resource could be, and an indication of how the money was going to be spent. This is an example of how the commissioning process followed a loose-tight approach. **The groups were asked for basic information to help focus their parameters of work, but left to independently lead on the project as freely as they wanted.** This opportunity was used to incentivise the groups' thinking about how to use their time and act on things without specific constraints, and without having to dedicate an unproportionate unpaid amount of time to provide details in advance. In some instances, the groups stuck with their initial idea and used it to inform or support other pieces of work, others resulted in using the commissioned research to respond to otherwise identified needs.

### How many hours contact have you had with a East Street Arts member of staff over the past two years?

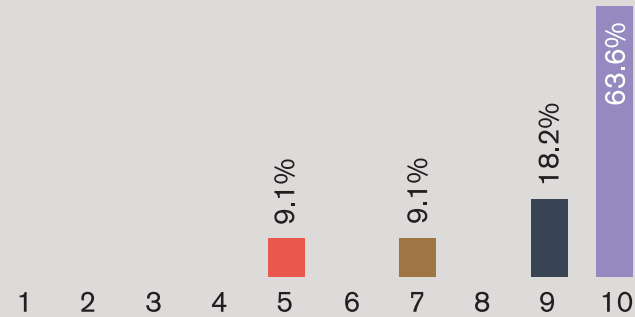


From a selection of the impact interviews, it was noted that the majority of groups found this approach useful, during the pandemic, in helping them come up with a specific project to work on. For most groups in the cohort, the pandemic forced the organisations to stop and reflect about their current way of working and how to use their time in lock-down to research how they could implement change. The commissions supported this reflexive period and often planted seeds of reflection. Meanwhile, whether through commissions or the virtual residency, the common ground

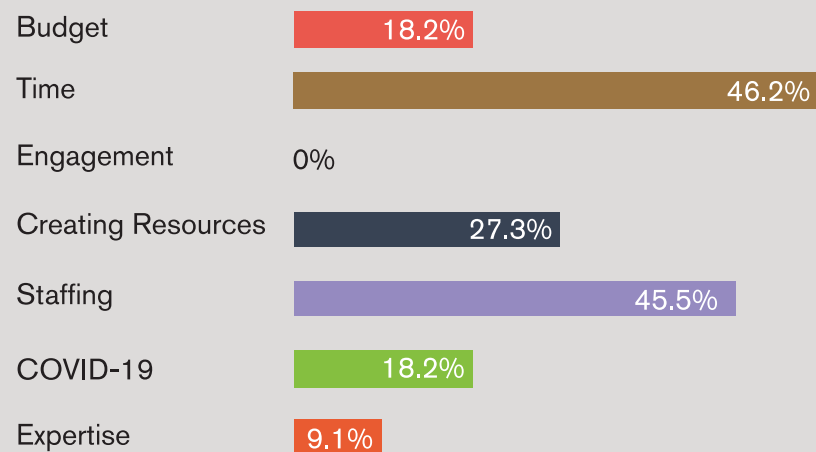
for this development activity was its use as an initiative for groups to keep working on the development of their organisations, and in some cases it was a pivotal point, mid-pandemic, to catalyse future work.

*"The framework of Guild forces you to think about those [the organisation, working practices, strategy] things a little bit more, than maybe you would if your head was buried in things all the time". - Artworks*

**On a scale of 1 – 10 how useful was this commission to your development? 1 being not successful, 10 being very successful**



**What have been some challenges in these commissions?**



**Interesting to know!  
Navigator North**

Navigator North used the Guild commission to inform the development of the cultural programme they had led on for two years. The programme was inspired by the Middlesbrough Winter Garden: a welcoming, warm, sober, gambling-free and self-improvement hub, founded by social reformer Lady Bell in 1907, motivated to improve the entertainment and leisure offer in Middlesbrough by inviting people to engage with alternative activities, outside of pubs and breweries. The 2012-13 Work & Play programme, inspired by this work, offered artists and audiences the opportunity to consider what leisure and entertainment means to people in the present day. Looking at the use of space and how it can hold the resonance of social and work related activity, of the past and the present through the lens of the arts and culture. Since that first project, Navigator North has supported the creation of a body of work to engage and be inspired by the history of the Winter Garden, partnering with the local Council, the Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art and other partners, to support further research, archiving and documentation.

The Guild Commission allowed the directors to have paid time and capacity to develop a programme of work, based on this continuing area of interest connected to the heritage and cultural themes of Middlesbrough Winter Garden. The commission supported planning time for ambitious activity, research and the associated fundraising required to put Navigator North forward as the lead partner on Middlesbrough's High Street Heritage Action Zone's cultural programme - Celebrating Hidden Middlesbrough. They received the maximum amount of funding for this project, just under £120,000 (and subsequently increased this amount to just under £160,000) and it signified a major change for the organisation.

*"We are in the middle of extending that work, we are going to work with the Council to lead on community engagement too around public spaces and heritage... The work on the Heritage Action Zone is probably the biggest piece of work we've done to date, and all spring from that little commission, really. That's incredible".*



# Case study: Commission Artworks



Artworks Guild Visit , 2019

Artworks is a community interest company (CIC) located in a grade two listed former-textile mill on the outskirts of Halifax, West Yorkshire. They occupy three floors: the first floor is the art school, which features extensive printmaking facilities, letterpress, ceramics, three teaching spaces and open access studios; the second floor hosts an exhibition space; and the third floor houses 20 artist studios. Artworks runs a variety of thriving learning programmes that range in length from one day to 12 weeks. Income to support this provision includes fee paying, free, subsidised, project-funded and outreach programme. Students span from ages five to 80 and come from a diverse range of socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds. One of the key participant groups are people with lived experiences of ill mental health and, most recently, displaced people, refugees and asylum seekers. The delivery of all activities are artist-led and many of the artists also have a studio on the premises.

For the Guild commission, Artworks proposed to gain an up-to-date picture of the artists living and working in Calderdale. Creating a database and using an auditing process, the project aimed at mapping the practices, skills and experience of artists working in this area. This process helped Artworks to build relationships with other organisations and partners in Calderdale and become more embedded in their locality. For example, by inviting those working in the private, public and third sector to engage with it and contribute with information. This auditing process resulted in a map that details the type of cultural infrastructure (archive, arts centre, artist workspace, creative producer, cinema, etc.), the cultural services, activities and offers (courses, workshops, concerts, artworks, commissions, talks, venue hire, etc), the specialism or discipline (music, applied arts, design, education, etc), and the audiences that engage with their work (e.g. adults, children, families). The map is live on the Artworks website and is still open to receive

new submissions and entries, with an existing 100 records already documented. It brings together information that has previously not existed in one place to enable users to see where cultural infrastructures and resources are located, learn about the type of work being made, the audience that work will reach and the consideration of what, and where, cultural activity might be missing. The intention of this project is to audit and learn two things at once: what can Calderdale do for artists, and what can artists do for Calderdale?

The commission should be understood within the context of the ongoing work that Artworks has been doing to support their community of studio holders and, as an expansion of this, to think about how artistic talent in the region is retained. As a result of this development, Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council has commissioned Artworks to further develop this work and to create a public-facing culture map that will live on a dedicated online web page for Calderdale's year of culture, 2024.

Artworks also used seed funding, awarded by Guild, to produce a feasibility study that evaluated their current site, exploring ways to make it more financially and environmentally sustainable. For example, by taking on another floor and fundraising for capital development to make the school more energy efficient. The study also explored another site and the possibility of asset transfer. However, they found challenges in securing a long-term lease and the capital investment needed and, therefore, decided to re-invest the money in stabilising organisational development.

Seed funding, combined with funding for mentoring and other support from Guild, has enabled Artworks to access training sessions and pay a consultant to support

them whilst they apply for charitable status. The funding has also paid for staff to dedicate time and attend paid away days, to engage in business planning with branding experts. This learning process has positively facilitated communication at an executive level, between the directors, and helped the delegation of the workload across the wider team, across senior and non-senior staff members.

*"We've definitely become more sustainable and we've embedded better working practices. Some of that's been learning and taking notes of other working practices, not just understanding but having support around implementing them".*

When they first applied, Artworks had one member of paid staff and around 20 artists working freelance across the organisation, supporting the delivery of courses and teaching. They have since grown considerably: employing eight members of staff, with a widened portfolio of 30 freelancers their website and branding are being re-worked; and they feel their communication is more efficient.



# Case study: Virtual residency

## Two Queens



Two Queens Ashley Holmes 'AAA' Performance

In 2011, Two Queens was founded by a collective of artists who occupied a large warehouse/factory, in which they are located today. The organisation has since evolved into a company with two appointed directors from the founding group. Two Queens has three main strands of activity: an exhibition and events programme, an associate membership programme of artist development activity and studio provision.

The exhibition programme showcases three main exhibitions per year and has a focus on developing solo projects with young emerging artists that will provide support at a pivotal point in their development. The associate membership programme is open to both studio holders at Two Queens and artists without studios. This includes monthly group crits, reading groups and artist development workshops. Their studios house more than 40 artists working in a range of media and disciplines. The studios are kept at affordable prices and occupy a mix of recent graduates and those with no formal arts education. The studios are mostly open-plan and facilitate a good core studio community that has grown over recent years, and used regularly by the artists

to provide peer support and opportunities for collaboration.

In their application to Guild they stated:

*"Our current lease runs until 2025, after which we have no security of tenure. At this point the landlords have made it clear they will want to sell the building, ideally to ourselves but at the moment we are very unsure about whether this is something we will be able to achieve".*

They decided to use the Guild virtual residency to create capacity to explore and form a board of trustees, and begin work on gaining charitable status. This has been a long-running aim of the organisation which often fell short due to day-to-day operations. Before the pandemic, they were close to beginning this work until the COVID-19 lockdown and furlough scheme delayed their efforts further. This residency gave dedicated staff time to identify and approach potential trustees, complete required research, and produce the appropriate paperwork. This work was complemented with Guild mentoring funding which allowed them to engage

in conversations with a range of people, and pay for their time. Not only did this type of research and development find their first board of trustees, it also instigated the review of, and changes to, the governance model they used, within the context of their needs and aims.

*"We were just on the edge of those things coming into action, having been involved with Guild and having dedicated time to work on that stuff, has definitely helped to get some answers together. Through the conversations we were having we started to review the idea of charitable status and actually further explored the idea of running a community share offer."*

Two Queens is now in the process of gaining charitable community benefits society status, which will allow the members to own the society. This form of co-operative organisation involves the setting up a board of directors, made up of members of the society, and members will buy a community share.

*"I think it will be good to feel and establish the community around Two Queens. Making it an official thing so that those people are part of the company and have a say in decision making means that it will be entrenched in the company structure".*

They have already set up an advisory board, though they would like to appoint a board of directors that together offer a range of expertise to constructively challenge, hold accountable and offer support to the organisation - advocating for it during this time of transition. The advisory board will instead retain overview of the artistic direction of the organisation, which could support a succession plan if the founders and directors decide to move on:

*"If the organisation transitioned into a different set of people, there's still a body there that is intended to maintain the current ethos of the organisation".*



Two Queens Shanice Simpson Opening



# Case study: *Virtual residency*

## Two Queens

The Guild seed funding is also supporting them to complete audits and reports to help enable them to buy and renovate the building they currently occupy through social finance. Accessing a webinar by Key Fund - one of the Guild partners - and speaking with a fellow cohort member, Bricks, was useful in discovering more about this community share offer as a type of funding. This incentivised the organisation to research further about this model and area of work. Two Queens has developed into a more stable organisation, and with an increase in funded staffing costs, they are able to secure the future of the organisation through dedicated strategic work.

*"In terms of what Guild has meant we could do, it should hopefully put Two Queens on track where we will secure the organisation into a form that's quite sustainable. Hopefully it can last for a longer period of time. I remember the intention of Guild being about artist-run spaces being short-lived in their nature and trying to find ways for artists and organisations to not fold up, after a short period of time... and for us, it has helped with that."*



List the ways in which you care for, and ensure the well being of, everybody you engage with throughout your daily practices.



If you mapped the cultural activities of your locality, what opportunities could arise from this research?



Two Queens 5 Lessons about forming a Board of Trustees 1. Talk to People, and Ask for Help

Because Two Queens has always had a D.I.Y ethos from the start, sometimes we forget to ask for help - we automatically try to work everything out for ourselves, becoming Jack-of-all-trades. The world of company structures and charity law is very complex - there is so much written guidance available that we very quickly became stuck trying to read it all and take it in.

Instead, the most useful thing we did during the residency was have as many conversations as possible - in the end managing 10 between March - May 2021. We spoke to organisations who do similar things to us (i.e. running artist studios alongside public gallery programming), some had been charities for a long time, some had recently gone through the process, and some were at a similar stage - researching and trying to find the best route. We also got professional insights from a Solicitor, an Accountant and an organisation supporting Co-Operatives and Social Enterprises.

The lesson here was that asking for help is vital - there are organisations that exist to develop businesses and not-for-profits, whose job it is to understand the intricacies of charity law so you can get on with what you do best. When it comes time to finally opt for a new structure we will definitely be seeking practical help with the process as well. ●

Talk to People,  
and Ask for Help



Two Queens 5 Lessons about forming a Board of Trustees 5. Board First

Our plan going forwards is to form an initial Advisory Board, working together with them and seeking professional help and guidance to decide the most appropriate structure to fit our future aims. Advisory Boards can also be assembled alongside constituted trustees to help with specific time-limited tasks such as a capital project.

Becoming a trustee is a big commitment, carrying specific legal responsibilities and ultimate oversight of the success or failure of the organisation. By bringing a board together in an advisory capacity to begin with, we will be able to test out how we work together and give board members the chance to decide if full trusteeship is right for them. Ultimately, without having a Board in place first, we can't start to make the big decisions that will shape the future of our organisation. ●

Board First

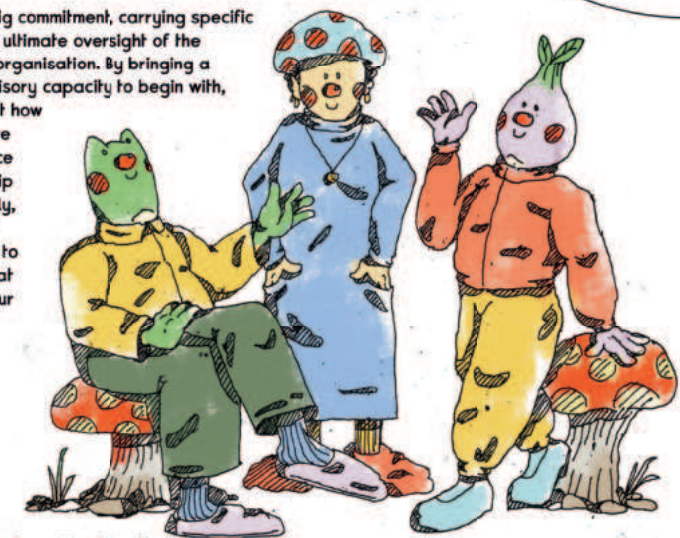


Illustration and design by Sam Jones (@drawingwerk)

## 3.3 Guild Conversations: Series 1

Y3

Guild Conversations is a programme of workshops, talks, webinars and facilitated conversations. The programme aimed to equip the artist-led sector with tools and resources by connecting them with artists and arts facilitators. The programme has three iterations and takes different forms: the conversation series for training, the “Space and Place” series, and the podcast series.

The first iteration was based on initial research at the beginning of Guild and its motivation to meet the needs of the cohort and the wider artist-led sector, whilst factoring in the capacity of our organisation during the global pandemic. The proposed events agreed with Arts Council England as a response to the pandemic, detailed conversations and planning sessions with the Guild cohort informed through a programme of online talks, workshops and resources alongside the research that the team did on case studies and national surveys.

*“The Conversations were really valuable sessions. I think they were really important because they gave us an input to think about...for example, how do we work with people? They stand out to me as being a place to connect with others. Group sessions offered the opportunity to connect with other Guild organisations, share preoccupations and even work a little bit together on, and through, things. At that time there was a lot of uncertainty because of COVID, the conversations were quite optimistic, I think all of those sessions felt quite empowering, optimistic and enabling, in a good way.” - Navigator North*

The first Conversation series was limited to Guild members, artists and studio holders and it delivered 18 different sessions over the course of six months. These conversations were not just online

talks on different topics, but rather a space for discussion and action through exercises, recommendations and practical next steps that could be implemented. Webinars were followed by individual and group bookable sessions and surgeries offered by the conversation facilitator/speaker. These included consultants from a range of backgrounds: fellow artists and producers in the arts, theatre and performance, marketers, managers, design, sound and communication specialists.

*“The one on marketing and social media, I found that really helpful and it kind of made me want to follow up and have a more bespoke session with the facilitator because it was really great and to the point. The session on governance was incredible. I would say that. The session on governance has had the biggest impact because that determined how we were going to constitute ourselves. So it's quite a big decision and we wouldn't have been able to make that decision without that session”. - Grief Series*

*“I thought the topics that they programmed in were so so good. There is one that really stuck in my head was from Toni-Dee Paul, asking whose voice leads your organisation? Is that like an inclusive voice? And if it's not, how do you become accountable for that and change it? In general, the speakers were just really great, I felt they were people from the industry with a lot of integrity. I have been on another panel with people from big institutions but you know, how is that going to make sense to people that have just graduated or small organisations? The speakers were not detached from us and what they had to say was really important, it really mattered and was born out of genuine experience and learning. I would definitely listen to ones I could not attend when they are online.” - Assembly House*

Guild Conversation	Facilitator
Planning for Growth	Matt Allen
An introduction to Governance	Emma Beverley
Audience Care	Ellie Harrison
Marketing ‘Like This’	Lydia Cottrell
Creating a safer spaces policy	Zavier de Sousa & Carmen D’Cruz
Making the margins central to artistic practice	Mafwa Theatre
Working with higher education	Ellie Harrison
Getting the most out of wordpress	Tom Pitts
Arts Council England grants and funding	Daniel Cutmore
Virtual peace: Sound bath	Sayang
Creating audience engagement plans	Kate Sanderson
Artists & Data, Session 1 ‘What is data?’	Reema Vadoliya
Diversifying Funding Streams: Actionable Fundraising Strategies	Ine Van Riet
Intentionality & Ethics of Practice	Teresa Cisneros
Creating Access Documents	The Triple Cripples
Caring for Black Artists	Toni-Dee Paul
Social Practice Surgery	Lady Kitt & Dan Russell



## Guild Conversations: Series 2

VI

The second round of Guild Conversations became less about specific training sessions to aid the management of an artist-led space, but rather an investigation into different models of structure and governance. With the theme “Space and Place”, we wanted to highlight the breadth of artist-led spaces currently operating in the UK, and representing a diverse community of artists, from studios with childcare facilities, safe performance specific spaces, studios for artists with additional needs

and spaces with a commercial venture. The format was a series of themed panel discussions, with presentations from speakers followed by a Q&A session chaired by an artist working within similar areas of work. The sessions were followed and documented by a commissioned artist, who amalgamated all the learnings into a new body of paper and text based works which were sent out to the cohort and other artist-led spaces across the UK.

### Guild Conversation

### Facilitator

**Inclusive Studios, Supportive Spaces & Accessibility**

Mother House  
Action Space  
Performance Space  
Chris Biblecome (chair)

**Sustainability, Programming & Alternative Income Stream**

South Square  
Royal Standard  
Spike Island  
Benedetta d’Ettorre (chair)

**Studios Q&A**

Spaces Team, East Street Arts

**Social Architecture, Place Making & Redevelopment**

Studio Polpo  
We Made That  
Laura Yuille  
Kate West (chair)

**Studio Swaps & Inclusive Residency Models**

Vital Capacities  
The Cow House  
Grizedale Arts  
Two Destination Language (chair)



**“It has been very useful to share and discuss issues through the Guild project and its associated Guild Conversation series. Leading one of the ‘Conversation’ events (‘Inclusive Studios, Supportive Spaces & Accessibility’) was a useful way to directly collaborate with the Guild Programme and reference research from Scottish artist-run spaces to better understand and compare access issues, inclusion and connected**

**communities. Through many of our Scottish workshop events artist groups have openly expressed a need to continue to develop more opportunities to discuss and learn from peer groups in safe and inclusive spaces – therefore I look forward to more future collaborative opportunities to link our artist groups across the whole of the UK.” – Chris Biddlecombe**



## Artist commission: Daisy James

During the Space and Place Guild Conversations series artist Daisy James was commissioned, after an open call, to produce a resource pack that summarised the collective discussions around 'best practices' for artist-led studios provision in the UK. Daisy James is visual storyteller and multidisciplinary maker working across a range of mediums, including graphics, installation, publication and public art. Her approach for this publication, followed an ideas-lead approach and used visual communication as a method of creating a visual dialogue - building narratives that connect people, place and time.

*"This project has appealed to me as it is an opportunity to experiment with how I can communicate outcomes from conversations that make the information impactful and be a force for change."*

Daisy's earlier work includes a beginners guide to archaeology and curated activity packs that encouraged people to develop their skills. This commission allowed her to continue exploring how to communicate information and further build on previous experience of data visualisation.

*"I think that these events are relevant because they offer insight into conversations that are often happening behind the scenes. It's interesting to tune into them and see the bigger picture. I realised how much has to happen behind the scenes for an art project to take place. There seems to be so much planning and admin that goes on behind each project and this is usually carried out by people who are having to learn on the job and who quickly become buried under pressure".*

Daisy's process was participatory and varied. She attended workshops and gathered information through a variety of media, wherever possible, documenting her

thoughts by making. For example, collecting photographs and sound recordings from participants, and mapping or visually scribing thoughts and ideas that were shared.

The produced resource pack was a printed publication, with a limited run of 150 copies, and included a directory of contact details for each of the speakers and guests that were involved in the conversations. Inside the resource pack, each conversation is presented uniquely in format - making for a vibrant and varied piece of editorial design.



Daisy James, in Convention House Risograph printing room

The "Inclusive studios, supportive spaces and accessibility" session summarises how Motherhouse Studios, ActionSpace and Performance Space have made specific provisions to ensure the accessibility of their spaces for: artists returning to work as parents; artists with learning disabilities who are working to develop a professional career; and welcoming the queer community. The summary sits next to a map that inspires others to think about enhancing accessibility, and has a space that prompts the reader to make personal notes.

Similarly, the session on alternative income streams mapped the ways of generating income by South Square Centre, Spike Island and The Royal Standard in a venn diagram. There is also a table that helps the reader to imagine different income streams and the pros and cons of each within the context of somebody who engages with artist-led spaces.

The session on studio provision draws on East Street Arts' experiences, and

process of setting up artist studios. It details the kind of different services and provisions studios can offer and how they can work on a meanwhile basis.

Four samp-shaped cards summarise the session on social architecture, placemaking and development. They present the practices of Asset Arrest, Studio Polpo and We Made That. The cards offer reflections on how to: measure success, design socially engaged practices, and how to manage and understand and implement the governance of policy around placemaking.

Three cards present the activities of Grizzdale Arts, Cow House Studios and Vital Capacities and offer food for thought about how residencies work. They ask: what are the barriers facing open calls? What is the role of a residency provider? Do specific spaces offer benefits to residencies?



Space & Place Guild Publication Series © Daisy James



## Guild Conversations: Series 3, In Practice podcast

Y5

The Guild team curated a series of impact interviews with the cohort, to evaluate the third year of Guild programming, and noted that members were mostly engaged with the previous Guild Conversations by listening only. The audio of the conversations were being played by the cohort, in the background, whilst they worked in their offices, homes and even when commuting. This feedback led to the development of a podcast series for the next phase (series three) of Guild Conversations - In Practice Podcast.

The initial idea for this series, having delivered workshops, training sessions, presentations and panel discussions on the day-to-day

running of an artist-led space, was to look at alternative models and programmes currently operating. However, it soon felt appropriate to uncover the invisible networks that aid the growth and sustainability of the artist-led space ecology. We wanted to make these networks visible and explore how they are formed and maintained between community groups, institutions, academics, funders and peers. The first series of In Practice is a set of six 30-minute episodes that are each hosted by a different member of the Guild cohort. Each member is joined by up to three guests of their choice to discuss the invisible connections between artist-led groups and local institutions, communities, and local authorities.



Guild Conversation	Facilitator
Values embedded in the Leeds arts ecology	Mafwa Theatre Ali Mahgoub, Leeds Refuge Forum Maha Amari, City of Sanctuary
Experiences as queer artists and how they can best be supported in Reading	Rising Sun Arts Annie Kershaw, A Girl Called Stephen Emeline Never-White, Rising Sun Arts G K Field, Double Okay
Art and health	Grief Series Mick Ward, Associate at Nature Development
Interdisciplinary artists, change, and the role of unions	Broccoli Arts Daisy Hale, The Hale Eleanor Dawson, The Writers Guild of Britain
Interrogation of gentrification and strategies of resistance in Margate (Part 1)	Bon Volks Sophie Mallet Dan Scott
Interrogation of gentrification and strategies of resistance in Margate (Part 1)	Bon Volks Sophie Mallet Dan Scott

**“As a queer creative person, I think these conversations are super relevant. Many of these conversations have dealt with difficult, and sometimes unspoken themes. And several of them have directly centred around marginalised communities. It’s been a pleasure to work with other queer creatives/organisations. Now that I’ve recorded all of these conversations, and had time to reflect on them, I realise that**

**there is one central idea, that most of these conversations have distilled. And that is the importance of intersectionality, the connectedness of things/people/cultures/ideas/space/place – all of these conversations discuss rejecting (traditional) binary notions or approaches in some way.”**  
– Kitty Turner, Podcast Producer



## Case study: Podcast Mafwa Theatre

Mafwa Theatre, a womens' drama group, was founded in 2018 with the desire to create more opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers to engage creatively and meet other communities living in Leeds. They use their platform to highlight and enable development opportunities for artists and theatre makers from migrant backgrounds, advocate for migrant rights and celebrate diverse communities.

Mafwa Theatre used their Guild commission to create a report that evaluated the first iteration of their Associate Artist Programme. The Associate Artist Programme was co-created with six artists from migrant backgrounds and aimed to develop their artistic practice by offering mentorship, professional development and the chance to create two commissions. The evaluation assessed the impacts of the programme in order to shape Mafwa's future work. **These findings can also be used to inform the work being carried out to widen arts provision and the support of migrant artists by other organisations in the sector.** Mafwa Theatre is working on making their projects and activities more visible to attract interest and support.

*"Setting up a board is a real problem, we have support from East Street Arts but we're not getting anyone because we don't have the social capital to know important art people and in the charity sector. It's an ongoing concern for us that we just cannot seem to get the right kind of support".*

Mafwa Theatre got together with partner organisations, local to Leeds, to talk about their perceived values in the Leeds' arts ecology infrastructure, and how their organisations are placed within that. Together they took a moment to learn from their community partners to discuss and reflect on the two sectors they work within: the arts

sector and the charity sector. They are not often able to pause, think and converse in this way, like many other small organisations. The Guild team, and East Street Arts, have complemented the directors' learning in how they have managed to grow the organisation considerably in a short amount of time.

**"We have essentially doubled our income for the last two years, moving away from a project-by-project approach to a multi-project approach. We've professionalised massively and now we have appropriate policies in place so that it doesn't feel like we're drowning as much. Now we're at a new stage where we can work and support a much larger team working. As we grow, we keep asking ourselves how do we have systems in place as organisational leaders to make sure people feel respected and not abandoned, and empowered to make decisions?"**

Puppetry sessions led by Jum Faruq at Kuluhenha Drama July 2021 @ Tom Arber





## 3.4 Virtual Studio Swap

Often artists will take part in a studio swap to gain perspective from another locality, discipline and network, similarly, companies will engage in employee exchanges to gather industry experience in another field. It was this idea, and the need to bring the cohort closer together after two years of minimal opportunities to network, that led to virtual studio swaps. The cohort members were divided up into groups of three, based on the size of their organisation, their scale, the ambition of their work, themes and disciplines.

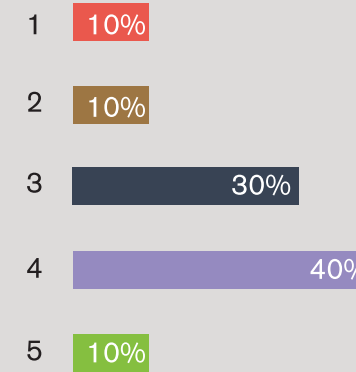
The groups were asked to communicate in a way that suited them, be that via WhatsApp exchanges, virtual calls or telephone calls, with an understanding that all members would contribute by showing their spaces and their work.

*"With the studio swaps I realised that a lot of the challenges that I was facing, other people were facing too. So I didn't feel that isolated in facing those challenges. I have a bit of a tendency to think that if there's a problem that it's because I've done something wrong rather than it's because the landscape is the way it is." - Grief Series*

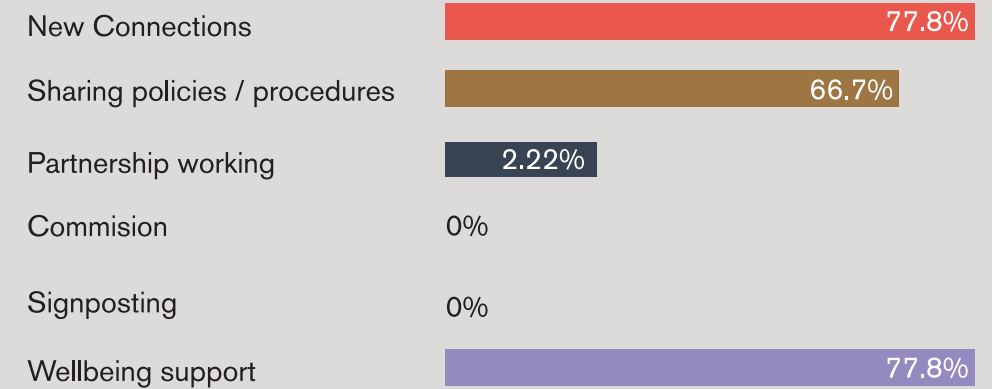


'Grief Series'

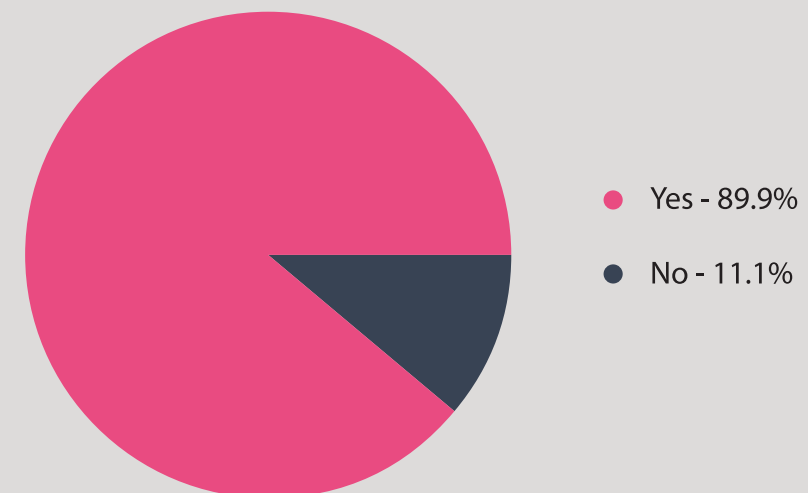
**On a scale of 1–5, how useful did you find the Virtual Studio Swap Process? 1 being not very useful, 5 being very useful.**



**What are some of the outcomes from the Virtual Studio Swap?**



**Will you continue to explore this connection?**





# Case study: Commission

## Proforma

Proforma is a non-profit visual art, performance and curating platform in Greater Manchester that supports artists and curators by commissioning new work and providing artist exchange opportunities, and offering an essential programme of development and mentoring peer-led talks for artists. The organisation has worked nomadically by establishing a strong network of national and international partners.

*"When we applied for the Guild project, we had some organisational structure and some funding in place, but I think we just needed that extra support to help us formalise in some way and just really solidify our practice".*

Proforma was also set up in response to an identified dynamic possibility for emerging artists and the retention of artists in the city. One of the objectives of Proforma was to advocate for better working conditions for artists and whilst supporting them to transition from 'emerging' to 'mid-career'. During the pandemic they worked on Desire Lines, a project delivered through a series of talks, commissioned artworks and discussions with simultaneous physical and live streamed activity. As part of the project, they commissioned artists to explore artists' working conditions around five thematic areas: liveability, inclusivity, networking, environment and sustainability.

*"Desire Lines set out a statement of how we could provide better working practices for artists. That's a free resource on the website, but PROFORMA was set up with this goal. Now, six years later, I am working with local emerging artist collectives, the art gallery and organisations around the country and I can see that our work has impacted both the artists who advocate and have tools to establish better working conditions, but I can also see results of saying "that's*

*not good enough" to the institutions and organisations we work with. It's great that we've germinated these seeds and they've kind of grown elsewhere, not in our control but in people's thinking."*

Proforma used their Guild commission to work on developing remote residencies for artists during the pandemic. Three years later, they are working with Venture Arts in Manchester to create a series of remote residencies for disabled and neurodivergent artists whose access needs are not met, and who will not be able to travel abroad. They use the remote residency as a way for them to develop works for international exhibitions with European partners. This connection with Venture Arts is also helping Proforma to expand their network as they



Dancehouse, Omid Asadi © Nathan Cox



Proforma meet with their board as part of the 'Role Play Governance' project

are introduced to like-minded organisations and funders. Not only has the pandemic expanded their current work, it has also developed the organisation into something different. Proforma has been selected to take over a shop unit, owned by a housing association, which has prompted a period of reflection about their work. Up until the point of a new tenancy, Proforma has, for the most part, been managed by the founding director, who saw taking on this space as an opportunity to develop a more outward looking approach:

*"Guild has allowed us to really expand from the initial insular application focusing on this very specific cohort of artists in the region of Manchester, to now expand on that and really improve what we offer, but also have a more of an outward look from being focused on this one region. We now think more widely about the North-West and the national ecology as well."*

Five years of experience running Proforma has informed the way in which the director wants to work with the space, which now hosts the Longsight Gallery project - a project that seeks to establish a community-

led organisation that can manage the space, long-term. A new director has been recruited and artists have been commissioned by Guild to work with local community members and look into different governance models.

*"Having a physical space, we could then use all this knowledge to inform how we work in our own space, so it's kind of going full circle now. I guess, going back into creating a new organisation, we put these things into practice."*

Through "Role Play Governance", the group of stakeholders will look into four models.

The models are: cooperative, charity, community interest company, and, one that could incorporate different elements from all three.

Each model follows a different approach, looking at the individual features that create an organisation, much like the ingredients of a recipe. The group then interrogates the models, whilst enjoying a meal together.



## Case study: *Commission* Proforma

However, whilst engaging with this process of interrogation and discussion, and excitedly anticipating their next steps, the stakeholders will work collaboratively on a governance document to address all aspects of the organisation, including an increase in access and inclusion, and managing conflicts and failures. This considered approach to organisational development, is a credit to East Street Arts and their connection to the wider Guild cohort, with a particular focus on the key work of Bricks and Navigator North during their virtual studio swap.

*"I think that knowing that you're not doing it by yourself, that there is a group of organisations, who are in different parts of the country and at different stages of their development, and that you could just call and say 'I am facing this tricky situation,*

*can you offer advice please?' is invaluable. The studio swap has facilitated a conversation about how much our respective organisations have grown within a certain period of time. It feels that there are people that are a bit further on their journey but essentially we all have very similar issues. We were able to talk about how sudden expansion or new premises really affect you as an organisation and what to expect. I think that the virtual studio swap has enabled me to think that, probably, I don't have all the answers and to learn from the experience of my peers".*

Once Longsight Gallery has established itself and taken shape, Proforma will continue to exist in its nomadic form and continue in collaboration with the organisation.

**Make a note of some potential studios you would like to conduct a swap with.**



**Can you identify who is a part of your support network?**



**List who, and what expertise, is missing from your support network. What do you need support with?**



Proforma, Dancehouse, Nicola Dale ©Nathan Cox





## 4.5. Go See fund

The nature of artist-led spaces often sees artists at the helm, spending much of their time working logistically throughout the space and troubleshooting, meaning their focus is distracted from their practices. Over recent years, most of the cohort spoke about building maintenance, governance, fundraising and having to adapt their spaces in line with COVID-19 social distancing regulations. This period allowed very little time for creative research and practice. The need for this outlet was still strong and spatial limitations had only exacerbated the feelings of the cohort who wished instead to experience things that would ultimately feed into their own personal practice and/or the creative direction of the organisation they manage. All things considered, it was very easy to justify making £500 funding available for the each of the cohort to read, experience an exhibition, performance, workshop or film.

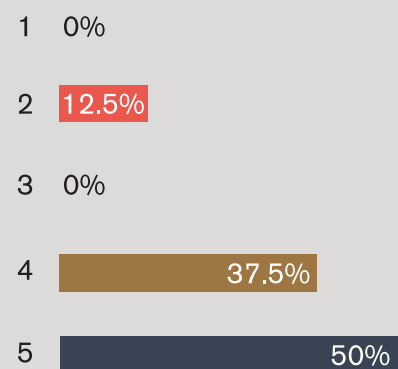


Fish Factory

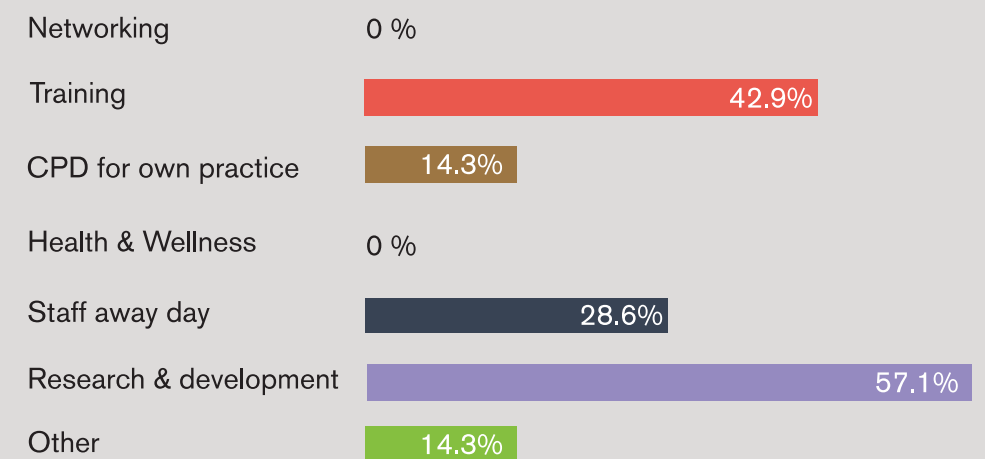
Cathy King, Double Elephant Print Workshop © Jim Wileman



**On a scale of 1-5, how useful did you find the Go See Fund? 1 being not very useful, 5 being very useful.**



**If you accessed the Go See Fund, what did you use this for?**





# Case study: Go See Fund CLAY

CLAY (Centre for Live Art Yorkshire) was originally set up as the LAB (Live Art Bistro) in Leeds. During their time as part of the Guild cohort the organisation underwent a period of development and re-framing of their role in the region and the sector. This change was in process before Guild, and their application to the programme was also driven by the desire to receive support throughout this transitioning into, and the establishing of, a new version of themselves.

*"When we applied as Live Art Bistro we were in such a different place. Not a great place financially and still felt very DIY, a different company and not very well set up. We were more commercially driven so trying to do events to earn money to put on more events. When I say DIY, I mean that we, the directors, were literally doing everything ourselves: cleaning the toilet, work at the bar, the programming. All this was largely voluntary".*

Whilst mostly operating as the same company, with the director of CLAY managing the adoption of a new identity, the aims and people of the organisation have partially changed, most notably with one of the founding directors having left. Their experience in showcasing live art events in Leeds, once assessed, called for an extension in their connections to the wider region and beyond. Most of the feedback from colleagues and performers highlighted a concern and need for stability in a venue. Especially because of the organisation's core values and ethos in becoming the reference point in the region, and home to emerging artists, and experimental practices, in as inclusive and accessible a way as possible.

*"The transition happened.. experientially. We are also artists and our community is a big part of our existence as an organisation.*



Age of The Virgin, CLAY, 2021 © Hannah Platt

*Our experience informed this process. We did a lot of ground checking with people, informally, and we learned that what was missing in Leeds and from the live art scene was a place, like a home for live art. There are festivals and things happening but not venues really dedicated to it. With the Bistro we had a programming team and the venue as a means to an end. But for us it became really important to give some stability to the sector, support exemplary live artworks and the people that make them in the region, we want to be a home for live art in Leeds".*

In applying to Guild, CLAY wanted to take the opportunity to professionalise. *"We wanted to get to the point where we could write a useful business plan".* This opportunity arrived just at the right time for their development journey, and with continued peer support from East Street Arts they have developed their commercial stream and positioned themselves in a much better place when applying for funding.

*"Income from commercial activities were higher but now they are much lower than our funding income streams. I am not sure if this makes us more sustainable, but it makes us more financially stable."*

Meaning that, although their time is being 'fiscally valued', they are able to contract help in to facilitate their work, and free up their time to better look after themselves and focus on neglected areas of the organisation. Areas such as: planning, strategy, funding, and expanding networks. Guild's mentoring funding supported the director to adopt a more strategic outlook and improve confidence when applying for funding.

*"Paying people to help us seemed really far away from something we could achieve, but with the help of Guild we started doing that and now we're on a roll of doing that. We did not have the funding to do it or the confidence, which also stopped us from working out the money for it .Engaging with people that know more, made such*

*a difference. The mentoring has been invaluable to our growth".*

Flexibility in funding also accommodated for mentoring sessions across different projects. For example, the combination of mentoring and commission funding leveraged other funding from Arts Council England, and this was used to fairly pay for the work on a pre-feasibility study - a study that provided a snapshot of where the organisation was at. Having a clearer, updated, view of the organisation's situation highlighted areas for development and a way forward.

The mentoring supported the organisation with financial analysis and training, teaching the language of funding applications and proposals.

When transitioning from LAB to CLAY, the ambitions of the team focussed and they wanted to be accountable for their sustainability and 'set up properly'. One of the things they immediately implemented



Juicebox, Leeds International Festival, CLAY © Ben Bentley



## Case study: Go See Fund CLAY

was the recruitment of a board of trustees. The board became an effective support and assented the director as they moved from a co-directorship to leading the organisation solo. Additionally, the expertise of board members fills the gaps in CLAY's existing specialist knowledge, with their experience in areas such as HR (Human Resources) and finance.

*"I was used to having someone at the same level as me and sharing responsibility, but now that I am the sole director I am looking for how I can share the burden of accountability with someone else".*

As the director was learning and working through new structures, and ways of working (operations and procedures), the board was supporting this process. However, the director did not feel confident about how to manage relationships, and work, with the board itself. While they had a very positive relationship, the board did not have a chair.

*"So what happens is that I end up running the board meetings. I've never been on a board before. I've never been to a different board meeting before. I don't know if I was doing it right."*

They (the director) came up with the idea of using the Guild Go See Fund to support them on a 'board tour', visiting and researching other organisations boards, securing extra funding from Guild to pay for their time writing up the findings. For their research, they identified three organisations: Fierce Festival, Homotopia and Longsight Art Gallery, and joined their board meetings to observe how they function. They also attended some of the organisation's events, to see if what they had learnt from the board meetings was visible in practice.

This research, 'the board tour', has reassured the director that every board, and organisation, is different. There is no specific way in which a board should work, beside their legal commitment. Another key finding was the lack of ethnic diversity in board members, and the collected feedback from the organisations suggested they do not often have the capacity to recruit in as diverse a way as they want to.

Initially, CLAY had an informal 'advisory board'. However, the decision was made to legally appoint a board, in order to be seen as more accountable by founders. Having had an advisory board, and learning from peers, the director expressed the benefits of having researched the different ways of working in helping to make bespoke decisions about how CLAY, and themselves, could best be supported by the legally appointed board they would go on to recruit. They had time to try things out, and realise how present they wanted, and needed, the new board to be in their organisation.

*"For sure, Guild facilitated my learning about boards and I think my biggest piece of advice to anyone who is recruiting a board is to advertise the position and interview applications like a job. If they go through that process, they want it enough."*

What A Drag, CLAY ©Jessie Leong





## Case study: Go See Fund Babeworld

Babeworld was one of the organisations that joined the Guild cohort through the Accelerator Programme in 2020. Babeworld is a disabled-led organisation that seeks to create a more representative art world through the creation of art, the facilitation of events, fundraising and grants - for those who are marginalised in the arts. With an emphasis on collaboration and co-creation, Babeworld's practice focuses on themes of political and societal identity, specifically disability/access, neurodivergence, sex work and race. They started as a grassroots organisation, born as a collective of artists that met while at university, and Guild represented the first major programme they engaged with.

*"We are not registered as a company and can only apply for funding as individuals. This puts us in a bit of an uncertain position, but Guild has given us the money to lay the groundwork for what we want to do. Thanks to Guild's financial support, we were actually able to use the time to work on getting other bits of money and develop in this way".*

An increase in regular commissions and a range of development activities allowed

the collective to explore their practice, eventually getting much more clarity about the focus of their artistic research. Even though they still maintain an open interest to all disciplines, from video games to critical thinking, accessibility is their key area of focus. The collective's members live in different parts of the country and support from the Go See Fund and other pots of money meant they could get together in person, which is a basis needed to share collaborative practice.

The Go See Fund allowed them to engage with Wysing Polyphonic, the Wysing Arts Centre annual festival of music and sound. It was a possibility to engage with a different kind of practice and engage with the work of other contemporary artists, but it also made it possible for the collective to share the experience and network at the event. From this event, they subsequently built a relationship with the centre and were eventually selected as resident artists. However, Guild's funding for training also meant that whilst in residency at the Wysing Arts Centre, the artists were also able to explore different facilities, machinery, and materials. Similarly, they were able

to leverage on Guild's in-kind or direct support to apply for match funding.

*"When we started, we were not getting many commissions, we did not have any governance, a studio space or a proper team. We've definitely scaled up, now we get a lot more commissions and more funding but what has really helped is shaping the culture of how we want to work together and our vision".*

In the past two years, the group underwent organisational training and development, taking advantage of the Guild's mentoring money to learn about accounting, how to

organise work, evaluate different governance models and the strategic use of social media and communications. A clearer vision, more experience and a solidified group makes the collective confident to be independent. Their learning and growth, that marked this period, will be translated into a new website, supported by the Guild legacy funding, to ensure that they will be able to communicate who they are, their interests and experience in the future.

**Can you identify three factors that impacted the development of CLAY and Babeworld?**



**How much time do you dedicate to visiting your peers?**



**In 50 words, reflect on how engagement with other organisations can help build confidence in your practice.**





## 3.6 Seed Funding

When thinking about a sector support programme, we had aspirations of providing seed funding to artist-led spaces to enable them to conduct feasibility studies on the development of a building. Seed funding usually indicates an investment by which a business or enterprise raises money to fund the development of their operations. This funding is usually invested during the early stages of a company's life to support them to generate their own income or ready them for further investments. Securing a building and making it safe and welcoming for artists to work in, was key to the development of East Street Arts. However, at the start of our journey, we found it difficult to raise this seed funding to properly plan capital developments. For this reason, it felt important to support our cohort in accessing the seed funding needed for feasibility studies, as a way of giving back to emerging artist-led spaces in similar positions to an earlier East Street Arts, some 30 years ago.

The seed funding offered them the opportunity to advance on their existing plans, or to explore the feasibility of different options in terms of acquiring and using spaces. Thus, the only specification for this fund was that the feasibility study or pre-feasibility study, if the groups were at the very early stages of investigating a building, needed to focus on a capital development. For example, the purchase of a building, the development of a current building or the possibility of securing a building. An external panel made up of consultants, architects and inclusion specialists issued £110,000 in total to 11 members of the cohort.

The seed funding was used for a range of feasibility studies including the exploration of supportive spaces for neurodivergent artists, integration of digital and physical spaces, to support the move from leasehold to purchase, and community asset transfer.

An external panel made up of consultants, architects and inclusion specialists issued £120,000 in total to 12 members of the cohort. The seed funding was used for a range of feasibility studies including the exploration of supportive spaces for neurodivergent artists, integration of digital and physical spaces, to support the move

from leasehold to purchase, and community asset transfer.

An external panel made up of consultants, Key Fund, Yvonne Dean Associates & Elephant Inclusion assessed all applications using the following criteria;

### List of cohort recipients and areas of exploration

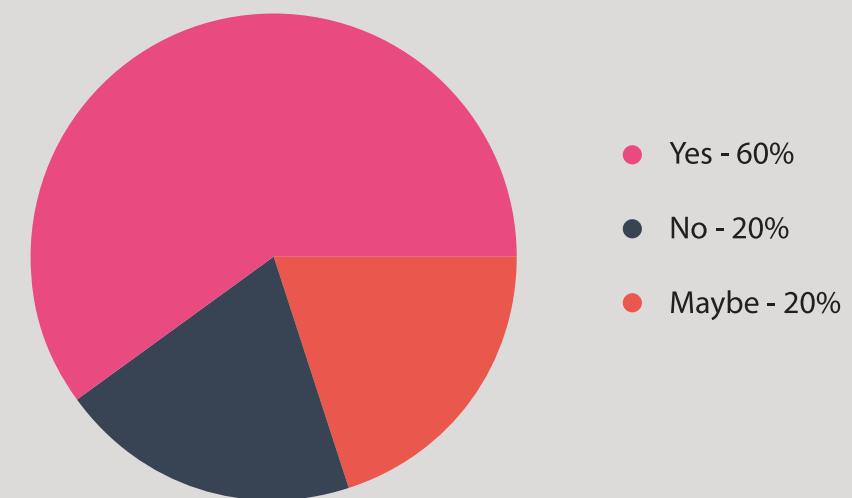
#### Feasibility

- Abingdon Studios*: working with local council to identify expansion or relocation
- Haarlem Artspace*: new income streams through renovations to existing space
- Artworks*: making space accessible and environmentally and economically sustainable
- Bon Volks*: community asset transfer
- Two Queens*: redevelopment around accessibility & purchase of space
- ORT Gallery*: relocation for better accessibility
- Rising Sun*: building development, redesigned outside space & ownership
- Bricks*: ownership of building and environmental concerns

#### Pre-Feasibility

- MAFWA*: exploration of community space
- Babeworld*: caring and accessible space
- Grief Series*: legacy of project and archiving
- Navigator North*: Architectural solution to meanwhile spaces
- CLAY*: long term space for presentation of programme

### Would you have carried out a (pre)feasibility study without the support of the seed fund?



### On a scale of 1-5, how much will a (pre) feasibility study help your organisation become more sustainable? 1 being not at all, 5 being very.



## Case study: Seed Fund Bon Volks

Bon Volks was born in 2015, when the founding directors took over a 3,000 square foot former-printing press in Margate. The organisation was created to provide affordable studio spaces that accommodated a range of practitioners. Bon Volks offers 20 studio spaces and a project space that can be used by members for exhibitions, photographing their work and other uses. 2023 marks Bon Volks' seventh year in the building, with the lease due to expire in 2025. Bon Volks is guided by a strong ethos which aims at placing ownership and control in the hands of its members. The organisation has existed primarily with two goals: firstly, to create a supportive community of members and studio holders that can directly shape the organisation and, secondly, to provide high quality studios at affordable prices that contrast the impacts of gentrification.

However, since the opening of Turner Contemporary in 2011, Margate has witnessed an influx of creatives who have migrated to the town and set up businesses, contributing to the rapid growth and changes in the landscape of the creative industry landscape and the city more broadly. The influx of activities and investments has led to an increase in property prices, meaning Bon Volk's lease is not likely to be renewed and the building probably sold - closing one of the biggest, most affordable, studio spaces in the city. The sub market rent price that Bon Volks studios are offered to artists, means only a small amount of income can generate savings for the organisation - of which there is a small amount.

*"We'd like to renegotiate a long lease on affordable terms. If we renegotiate the next lease and it means that our studios will be 50% more expensive, that's just pointless. We just become like everything else, it just becomes unaffordable and we are just creating the same problem. So I don't know*

*whether I would have the power at that point to say no, stop it, is this the end."*

The seed funding was utilised by commissioning Meanwhile Space CIC to advise Bon Volks on their plans in the current premises. The advice included: an overview of creative workspace and studio provision in Margate; advice on their arrangements under the current lease; options for the future, which will include the extension of the existing lease and the acquiring of the existing building or relocation; and recommendations about how to move forward.

*"The value for me, and for the organisation, is just having somebody with expertise who can look at the situation objectively and set out clear possible paths and results".*



Guild Visit, Bon Volks

Ian Hall and Ollie Harrop Photography Studio, Bon Volks



One option to explore, presented during the advisory sessions and future mapping, was the potential opportunity of a new development in the city: working with recently established Creative Land Trust (CLT). CLT is one of the projects put forward as part of the £22 million Margate Town Deal. The project funds the ownership of underused or empty properties, through outright purchasing of freehold properties or longer-term leases, or through the gifting or transferring of properties to the trust by public or private partners.

The properties will be used to create affordable commercial space for creative industries and support services. The hope for the council is to make use of empty properties, generate investment in the town centre and create jobs and training

opportunities. The report recognised Bon Volks as "...one of the largest and most important arts organisations in Margate". There are several ways in which the organisation could bid to the CLT for funding, to either refurbish the space and increase current business viability, support the transition into a new space, or to adopt a different business model.

One of the identified next steps, in the report, was the strengthening of the board of directors, which currently consists of the two founding directors and a studio holder. However, only one of the founders is active in post. The director of Bon Volks has tried to engage participation from studio holders when governing the organisation, in a non-hierarchical way, however, this process has not sustained in becoming standard practice.



## Case study: Seed Fund Bon Volks

Meanwhile Spaces have supported the director in thinking about how to engage local people, with specialist knowledge and skill sets, to join the board of directors and support the organisation's future development.

*"Setting up a board was in my mind before this because it was not fair for everything to be on me, but the consultant's advice and support really got me moving into making this happen. I have also realised what properly setting up a board can do for Bon Volks."*

The Guild Go See Fund has also inspired the director's thinking and expanded their imagination when thinking about the organisation's purpose and position in the community. For example, they were inspired to visit Bristol-based Guild cohort peer, Bricks.

*"Seeing Bricks in that local authority building was refreshing. It has a huge amount of space, which obviously brings its own*

***"This moment of transition is challenging but it also gives us the opportunity to re-think and question the direction of the organisation. I am constantly thinking about how this is meaningful. If you had asked me two years ago if this building is important for Bon Volks, I would have said yes, the building is integral. But we have almost maximised any possibility here***

*challenges but there is the possibility, and the ability, there to create a lot of different things for the artists and the local residents. I want Bon Volks to be a resource to the people around it, not just to its members. I think organisations like ours, of our size, can change how they operate and move quickly in space and interest. We can pivot around but we have a responsibility to be useful to the community and sustainable for the environment."*

Soon, Bon Volks will find themselves at a crossroad. However, there is still time to explore the different options laid out in the feasibility study. The seed funding has supported the organisation to explore these different options of feasibility, but importantly, it has also highlighted the need for the organisation to rethink their priorities, values and purpose. It is crucial that time is invested in setting up a sustainable way of facilitating shared governance for the organisation, to give clarity as they move forward.

***to create revenue. If another council owned building became available we would probably just move. But, at the moment the building represents a barrier to us, resisting the possibility of the organisation becoming other things and being better at what we do."*** – Bon Volks

Howard Dyke Residency Exhibition Preview, Bon Volks





# Case study: Seed Fund Haarlem Art Space



Haarlem Art Space Studios ©Will Slater

Haarlem Artspace (HA) opened in 2017 as a Community Interest Company (CIC) providing affordable and quality studio space for artists and creative businesses in the rural town of Wirksworth. Until the global pandemic in 2020, HA ran an arts events and exhibition programme in an historic mill, housing artists studios over three floors for 35 artists. In November 2021, HA opened a new gallery, in a different space in town, which is part of a community complex with a hotel, restaurant and real ale house. In 2022, HA encountered financial difficulties, forcing them to close artist studios and almost bringing the organisation to an end. Paul Carr, an entrepreneur and resident of Wirksworth, has supported the team to get back on their feet.

*"I have been a resident of Wirksworth for the last 25 years so I have known about the work of Haarlem Artspace CIC. They were really successful in bringing new people into town. People would relocate from London, Nottingham, Bath and Bristol because they*

*found a creative hub. In 2013, I set up a small independent cinema and we've seen the benefits of economic regeneration through the creative sector. Now I am also part of the Council and we are trying to formalise a vision for the town, with the creative industries at its heart."* - Paul Carr

Around August 2022, HA was issued a £42,000 rates bill and the director immediately considered liquidation as their only option. They announced their position to the studio holders and many immediately moved out of the space.

*"Out of the 35 artists in the studios, around 20 lived locally. I did not want to lose them. They get involved in the curatorial and creative aspects of living in a small rural town and have a much wider impact. Obviously, they also contribute to the local economy by living and working here."* - Paul Carr

To avoid the loss of studios and artists, Paul quickly set up another company to take over

the lease of, and protect, one floor. This made evident why Haarlem Artspace was having to pay such high rates: as they occupied three floors as one company, exceeding the threshold for rateable value. The solution and, their following action, was to set up three separate companies, occupying each floor. This increased the administration of their finances and accounts, but reduced the business rates by around £20,000 per year. Despite this effort, around 15 artists vacated their studios, to which Paul responded with an offer of three months rent free, in an attempt to maintain their occupancy rate and restore the viability of the business. Additionally, they noticed an error in their rateable value. There were errors in the noted dimensions of each floor space, which was used to calculate the rateable value. They contested this error and appealed for the miscalculated costs to be refunded.

After negotiating the accrued costs and the incorrections across a five-year period, the rent for the spaces was adjusted and covered running costs, the outstanding debt amounts and additional amounts paid into a reserve. Since October 2022, the reserves have been re-invested into the building, making it further secure and fit for purpose. The funds were also used to acquire matching funding, which successfully attracted start-up funding that was used for renovations and publicity for 12 months.

This period of instability saw a high turnover of directors for Haarlem Artspace, but now that they're back on their feet the organisation has reached a crucial moment in their development, understanding what best practise looks like for their work moving forward. They have recently decided to apply for charitable status due in part to the demand from the local authority for business rates on the studios. Haarlem

Artspace is dedicated to supporting, and critically engaging with contemporary, artistic practice that explores the rural area. From its founding days to 2022, Haarlem Artspace has worked to become a national leader on rural contemporary arts, promoting an eco agenda centred around rural issues. Operating as a cluster organisation, with paid staff, each member of the cluster needs to work sustainably and cohesively in an interlinked business model within the town of Wirksworth. They have taken advantage of the seed funding to complete feasibility research. During this time, they looked at governance, operational structures and business models. In doing so, they hope to find clarity in the organisation's future and to have found similar organisations they can partner with who share a similar mission.



Haarlem Art Space



## Case study: *Seed Fund* Haarlem Art Space

The feasibility work offers dedicated time for the executive team to focus their research time on the governance and business modelling for the studios and gallery spaces. Recently, the executive directors have given up their monthly wage to pay for a studio community coordinator, therefore the seed funding ensured there is dedicated, funded time for this work to move forward.

They have identified a range of activities and relationships to engage in, as well as reflection time to ensure their values are embodied in their future business model. In particular, collaborating with artist Ellen O'Hara and duo Fourthland to take a more imaginative approach to engaging with their different stakeholders and partners.

*"We want to explore the best business model, technically, creatively and financially, for our specific context and our two spaces. Our identity has been rooted in the Haarlem Mill building and now we need to consider being a multi-site organisation and it is now critical we explore how we move to this new model. Working with Fourthland to vision and foster good relationships with our new board will ensure we get the best from these organisational changes and that our artistic vision and values remain at the centre of what we do".*

**Can you spot what caused Haarlem Art Space financial difficulties, and the solution they found?**



**How is seed funding different from other types of funding? How many different types are there?**



**Write a 50 word action plan, detailing how you would move forward if you were in the same situation as Haarlem Artspace**



Haarlem Art Space Studios ©Will Slater



## 3.7 Mentoring

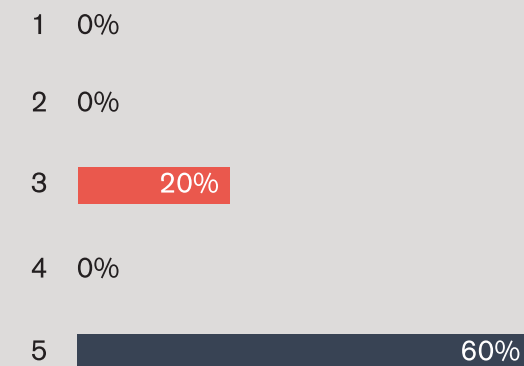
During East Street Arts journey, we have sought the advice and guidance from a number of friends, consultants and peers. We have a wealth of knowledge and experience we can bestow upon the cohort, however, we are still learning ourselves as we continue to develop. **It is because of this continual learning that we wanted to curate a pool of consultants, with specialist knowledge, that the cohort would be able to take advantage of.** The recruited consultants were known to us through previous projects, from our Guild conversations, from trustee boards and national networks. Their specialisms were vast and spanned from community asset transfer through to working with displaced communities. The cohort took advantage of these contacts and the gathered knowledge was often presented back to the group during online sessions and in-person events.

**Interviews from the cohort reported that: mentoring gave people the confidence to pursue different strands of work. For example, applying for funding, or self-funding, to recruit a consultant who can offer the knowledge to facilitate organisational development. They can open up a dialogue and use these connections as sound boards, asking questions or receiving explanations about processes, evaluation models or help. The consultant can advise with clarity and a distanced perspective, remaining objective – a useful insight.**

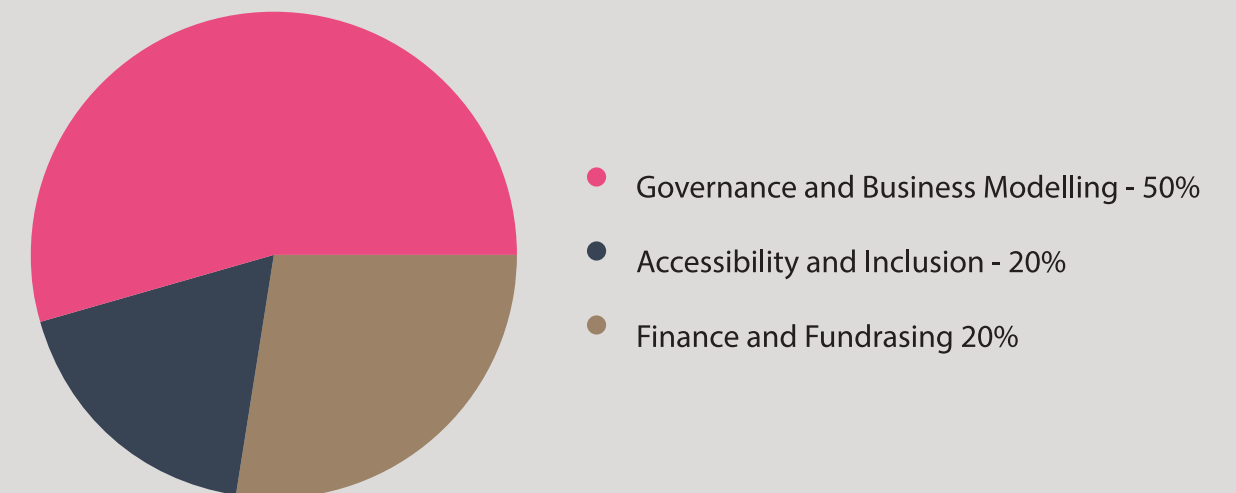
Most groups had about three mentoring sessions. Sometimes within the same month, to get through a specific bit of work such as

a funding bid. Other sessions were spread out to allow directors and founders to go away and spend time working by themselves. Regular contact points remained valuable in terms of accountability and contrast isolation. Giving confidence to instincts and ideas that have started to cultivate but there is never quite the time to explore. **Mentoring sessions gave the cohort the confidence to bring attention to, discuss, and evaluate ideas with a diverse range of perspectives.**

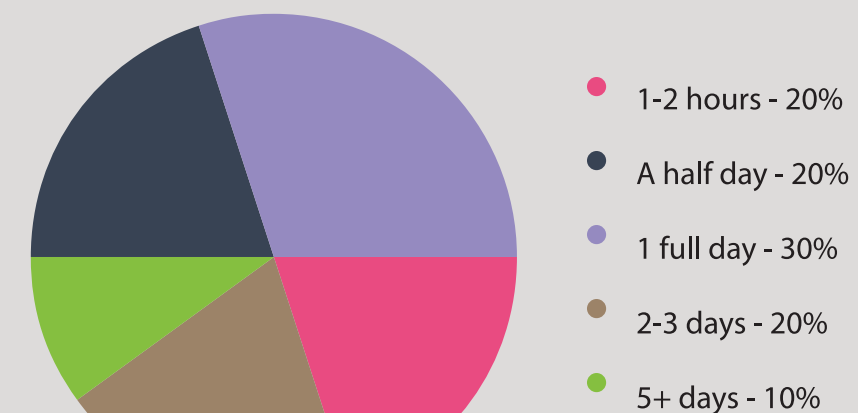
**On a scale of 1–5, how much of an impact has access to a mentor ensured the sustainability of your organisation? 1 being not very, 5 being very.**



**What support has the mentor offered?**



**If you accessed a mentor this year, how much contact time did you have with them?**





## Case study: Mentoring Ort Gallery



Ort Gallery ©Marcin Sz

Ort Gallery was founded in 2012 and incorporated as a Community Interest Company (CIC) in 2013. Ort Gallery had a café on the ground floor and a gallery space on the upper floor until 2015, when the founding directors decided to continue the gallery space only. One director remained in an executive role and the other then worked in an advisory capacity. Between 2012 and 2018 the gallery has gone into 'hibernation' twice, which meant that they stopped producing any events or exhibitions due to a lapse in regular funding. At the time of applying to Guild in 2018, they were in such a hibernating phase and were looking for a long-term lease in a building but were also considering giving up renting a space to experiment with alternative models through a 'space-less approach' (e.g. curating exhibitions at other venues). However, at the end of 2019 they moved the gallery into the building next door, to increase access and operate in a renovated space. Having a 'regular' space was considered necessary to continue

engagement with their audience, as Ort's main aim is to engage with the local community and facilitate a dialogue that brings people together that would not otherwise meet. Through informal networks, WhatsApp groups and community ambassadors they have developed a relationship with a local audience. The work of the Gallery is centred around the engagement and representation of under-served communities, which make up the majority of the population in the neighbourhood. The director of Ort Gallery used Guild mentoring money to support and question the leadership of the organisation going forward. The mentoring was "professionally life changing".

*"Melanie Keen was my mentor, we spoke of succession planning as she had just taken on the role of CEO at Wellcome Collection and had previously been CEO of Iniva. She felt strongly that leadership positions shouldn't be for life and that she wanted to build a succession plan into her own role."*

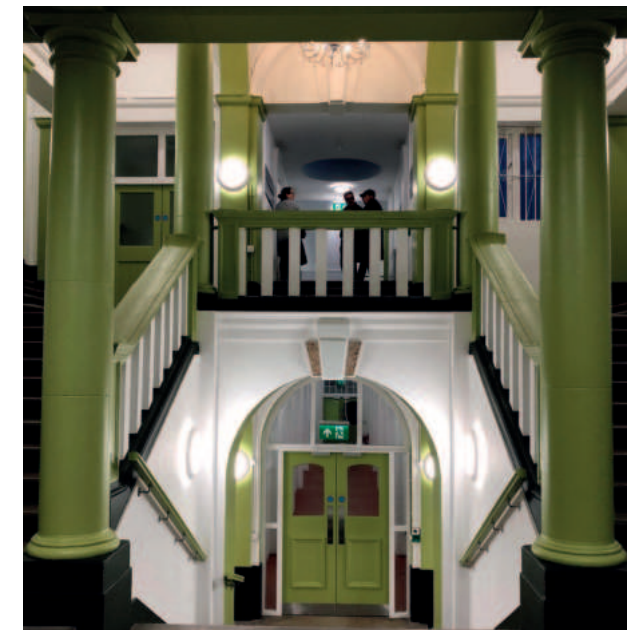
*"I immediately connected to this as I was questioning my role as a white middle-class hetero cis woman leading an organisation based in Birmingham and working primarily with Black and Brown artists from working-class backgrounds. I felt that Ort could only ever get so far in its journey towards equitable working methods and becoming a safe space if I remained the lead."*

The mentoring sessions propelled change in the organisation both at leadership and policy levels. In terms of leadership, the director worked with the board to develop a new position: the Artistic Lead, that could only be in post four years. If managed correctly, implementing this condition for any future directors is an incentive to embed strategic planning in their leadership to create and keep sustainable infrastructures and operations that can be passed on. It also helps to determine a timeframe for present programmes and activities with SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-based) objectives and supports directors to work for the organisation. This latter feature aims at guaranteeing the development of the organisation to stay true to its mission and prevent it shifting towards a development associated too closely with personal agendas. Recruiting a new artistic director not only allowed the founder to spend more time fundraising and supporting the transition by establishing clear policies and organisational culture but, also, to move on and develop their experience in supporting other organisations to grow, to improve their governance and policies, and work towards equitable practices.

*"I think Melanie encouraged me to make this pretty big leap and as you can see from other spaces in the arts in the UK, not many CEOs stepped down following 2020. I should also say that handing the role over to Aaisha was harder than I expected. Someone going*

*through all the wins and challenges of 10 years of work with a fine comb is exhausting and emotional. But we worked through it together".*

The change of leadership also allows for bringing in new perspectives and experiences. The new artistic director shares lived experience with artists, curators and audiences and has been able to connect with them in meaningful ways, which has increased engagement with new topics and practices.



Guild Visit, ORT Gallery

At the level of internal policies, the founder and director have been setting out and establishing actionable principles for ways of working that respect the ethos of the organisation. The development of new policies sit hand-in-hand with the beginning of the leadership transition, as they influence each other. The financial support provided by the Guild commission was used as match funding to bid for substantial support from Arts Council England to fund research, training and development towards policy writing.



# Case study: Mentoring Ort Gallery

The result of this work is a report entitled 'Warmth'. The report explains the working methodology that Ort has been developing and embedding in their policies.

*"We took warmth as a starting point because it's something very simple to grasp, methodology that you know, you just feel it. Is it warm? Yes or no? The idea was to apply concepts around care, looking after each other and looking after ourselves to everything we do. And then once we're ready to do that internally, we can work better with others externally."*

One of the principles set out in the report is about self-management, to ensure that staff and volunteers that work for the Ort Gallery can challenge, influence and shape the organisation. The four-year tenure for the artistic director was a concrete action to support this way of working. Other actions include: providing professional development to team members that want to take on the artistic direction role in the future; paying a fee to the board directors who attend meetings to ensure people from all walks

of life can afford to take part; accountability and transparency in terms of rates of payment; and provision towards supporting staff mental health.

*"Essentially, the majority of the knowledge of how to be a caring employer was already within us and our community, we just had to build the confidence to turn this into working methods and policies that serve us all. Then we had to check these against the legal framework we operate in (CIC set up and board of directors as well as wider UK employment law), then we spent a year trying our new policies and working methods out in practice and learnt on the go what was working and what wasn't."*

A second updated report was published after the one year testing and review of these new policies to formalise a commitment to self-reflection and new ways to improve or change.

*"This way of working also grows our confidence and resilience so it now feels easy and exciting, no longer exhausting."*

Artwork by Ort Gallery and Sabba Khan



**Highlight the influences  
on Ort Gallery to implement  
an exit strategy.**





## Case study: Mentoring Navigator North

Navigator North has been based in Middlesbrough since 2010 and has managed a space in partnership with East Street Arts since 2011. This began with Dundas House – which remains Navigator's HQ space. They have also been managing a number of other spaces through East Street Arts' temporary spaces programme. These spaces are all within the Tees Valley region and have played host to a number of different activities and events. Through temporary spaces they have supported over 100 artists, becoming one of the largest providers of artist studio space in the north-east of England. Alongside managing these studio spaces, in temporary space, they have also developed a range of programmes that have supported the professional development of artists practice, not only for studio holders but artists and practitioners around the region.

As a Community Interest Company (CIC) one of the directors is paid two days per week to both manage the studio spaces and complete company admin and communication. All three directors work on the projects and programmes, where funding allows them to, and currently any organisational development work is done in kind.

Navigator North applied to Guild to support their development around different areas such as: **income generation, evidencing and evaluating their work, profile raising and establishing their position in the Tees Valley.** There was also interest in exploring whether they have the right type of organisational structure in place and to look at how their governance as a company can impact their ability to generate income or have the right capacity to grow or change.

*“Over the last few years we've realised that the kind of governance model that we had for Navigator, being a CIC, wasn't really fit for*



Paul Murrays Sand Castles at STABLES ©Jason Hynes

*purpose for the workaround spaces that we wanted to do. Some of the lessons that we've learned in the last few years have helped us to make that decision, I suppose about forming a charity. So that's probably the really key thing to come out of the last few years and Guild supported that as well.”*

At the beginning they thought about converting their CIC into a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) but being able to work with a consultant through the Guild mentoring funding established that setting up a separate charitable organisation whilst keeping the original Community Interest Company would better serve their interests.

*“The mentoring is helping with this process, it's been a very tailored support in terms of where we are right now, where we want*

*to get to and what are the steps to get there. We understood the different roles and responsibilities associated with different governance models. Mentoring was also from a wider governance and finance advisory perspective, so quite strategic in this way”.*

A better understanding of the different influence of directors, financial advances as well as legal commitments deriving from these two kinds of organisations helped them to make the decision.

*“We were reluctant to give up our artistic direction and that kind of creative influence that we can have as a CIC, but a charity can help us to directly secure temporary spaces and work with different funders, so in this way we can have the best of both worlds”.*

As Navigator North finds itself in a moment of change, it needs to pave the way forward and being able to access other kinds of support is helping this transition. **Expanding into a charity and a company could allow for growth and enable a series of different projects, uses and business models.** The

organisation will need to re-frame its purpose and how it works in the region. The Virtual Studio Swaps were helpful to connect in a smaller group and offered valuable insights from informal peer-knowledge sharing. Navigator North met with Bricks and Proforma and we had useful conversations around buildings and governance. Bricks was starting to work with their building while Proforma was setting up a project on governance, this match proved beneficial for Navigator North as they were also looking at the spaces they manage and changing their governance.

On the other hand, while both founders of Bricks and Proforma have previous experience in the arts and leading organisations, they are much younger organisations than Navigator North and their position as experienced during times of change evoked many interesting conversations, questions and advice **as they could enquire and draw from each others experiences and different methods and models of working.** Initially, the organisations met online as the Virtual Studio Swap was



Navigator North Princes Trust course as part of NICE programme



## Case study: *Mentoring* Navigator North

set up in response to the pandemic, but they later visited each other in person:

*“On video call we showed each other around and that was funny but getting a feel for a building in person when you’re talking about buildings, I think it helps getting a feel for how the buildings are used, who’s in them and then you can sit down to talk about how people use the building, how to staff it and work with people and volunteers, whether and how these organisations are similar to you or different.”*

Guild Seed Funding is also being used to support research and development of the organisation. At the end of 2023, they lost a significant number of studio spaces, this meant that their income was almost halved and placed them in a tricky financial position.

The Seed Funding is also being used as a piece of action research:

*“It [seed funding] is actually giving us an opportunity to test out models of working with the space. We need to instate immediate provision for improving the temporary spaces. Our experience and feedback from artists tells us that they don’t want big open spaces but individual, lockable spaces. We want to implement a solution that allows us to divide temporary spaces in efficient, cost-effective and temporary manners so that we can quickly set up individual studios and take them down if we need to move out of the space. This obviously will impact our present situation but it is also a way forward to support our development and make us more sustainable in the future”.*

**How would an exit strategy change your organisational structure?**



**How would you identify a mentor? List the knowledge and experience you think you need to support you.**



Navigator North Print Room at Dundas House





## 3.8 Continued support for the cohort

### Guild cohort: Funding

Y1 - Y5

Throughout the five-year programme we have remained agile and responsive to the needs of the cohort, adapting elements of the programme to suit individual circumstances. Small funds ranging from £250 to £1,500 per cohort member, have facilitated a number of development opportunities. Each year these funding streams have been restricted, unrestricted and used for a range of things including: training sessions (first aid, finance, facilitation), travel (cross-cohort site visits and research trips), capital purchases (tech, office furniture, building materials), temporary staffing (social media assistant, bid writer, workshop facilitator) match funding for bids, or access costs (access assistant, software).

*"Having money dedicated to organisational development not having money that it's tied to delivery but money that's for us to think about how we can improve our organisation was super so powerful. So that we can meet and actually have time to do those things" - Artworks*

*"The flexibility of how to use the money was the best thing. They did not give us a chunk of money at the beginning but bit by bit through the different activities. Often we decided to save them for later and this gave us the time to think about how to use the funds. So that if something came up they could say 'ok, I'll use this' and they had a clear purpose." - Assembly House*

*"I think the Guild funding framework was designed to move us forward and it has enabled that. Not asking all details in advance nor at the end, could present an idea and get on with it. Obviously there were check-ins but they were essentially flexible and trusted us." - Navigator North*

### Guild cohort: Ad hoc support

Y1 - Y5

Structured support programmes made available to the cohort each year meant fair and even distribution of funds and advice. However, it was vital these programmes adapted to the needs of the cohort and their often changing landscape and infrastructure. The Guild team provided much bespoke support throughout the years, often acting as a crisis team, on hand for the cohort. Many issues arose such as: the closing down of a company, reputational damage following an incident, a breakdown in partnership working, landlord disputes and unforeseen rates bills. Drawing from the knowledge of the wider East Street Arts team, and its collaborators, we were able to offer solutions to these problems. Requests for further policy development, letters of support, proofreading funding bids, board recruitment, signposting opportunities, and recommendations for commissions are all additional examples of the ways in which the cohort have been supported by East Street Arts throughout the years.

*"The Guild team worked as critical friends... it can be quite lonely and having somebody that you can talk to just about the thing that you can't talk to anyone else has been really helpful. To think about it in new ways as well. So that's something quite rare. You don't get the chance to take a step back and reflect on what you are doing and think about it. Having support like that, kind of critical thinking, about the organisation and having people to do that with that are also doing it, it's really important to feel supported." - Artworks*

*"I think that's a confidence thing about justifying what I am doing. Should I, as*

*a director of a small company, follow my instincts? If you don't have experience, having someone to answer to a little bit but not having to put loads and loads of strategic thought into is like a really useful process. I can speak with the Guild team and tell them 'I'm thinking about doing this. I want to speak to these people. What do you think?' and they can just say 'Absolutely, that sounds amazing' or 'That sounds ok, can you tell me about this, this and this bit though? Because I don't feel clear about that'. Just having a kind of friendly accountability process, I think it is like a really useful tool." - CLAY*

### Guild cohort: Membership subscriptions

Y1 - Y5

During their time on the Guild programme, the cohort gained membership to Locality - a national membership network that supports local community organisations to be strong and successful. Locality provides specialist advice, peer learning and resources to local community organisations, in line with their campaign to create a better environment for communities to thrive. The cohort also received a year's annual memberships to Creative UK - a not-for-profit organisation that supports the creative industries in the United Kingdom. Creative UK promotes the development of creative companies, which in turn support businesses across the gaming, film, creative and digital media industries, as well as production services.



## 4. Collaborations and research

The broader remit of Sector Support Organisations is to support the cultural sector and underpin our cultural infrastructure, driving progress and change. Guild took a bilateral approach by delivering support and development activities internally to its cohort members.

The project also engaged in the exchange of knowledge and support with external organisations to research the sector and advocate for change. To affect the wider cultural ecosystem, partnerships with Unlimited and a-n (The Artists Information Company) have been established to enhance the support for artists and artist organisations to amplify their voices. The partnership with a-n has facilitated exchanges between the Guild cohort members and their national networks, and with Unlimited we have worked on improving the accessibility of artist studios.

However, advocacy work can only advance if supported by evidence and research.

Unlimited has been an instrumental partner, leading on research about extractive and exploitative practices towards disabled artists. We commissioned artist duo The Uncultured to research the extent and value of unpaid labour in artist-led spaces. Artist collective Shifting Sands have focused on researching postgraduate support from HE (higher education) and FE (further education) provider in Yorkshire. The doctoral research, led by the University of Leeds, focussed on reframing the understanding of sustainability in the cultural sector, how artist-led spaces contribute to the wider cultural ecosystem and the role that organisational development plays in the longevity of artist-led organisations.

**Do you find it difficult to evidence the impact of your work? Write down the tools and/or processes you could use to better the area of work.**



**Have you ever worked in partnership with other organisations? What were the pros and cons? If not, what do you think they would be?**





# Research: Guild x University of Leeds

Y1 - Y5



PHD Researcher Benedetta Dettorre chatting with Two Destination Language at the Guild Residency, 2021 © Hannah Platt

In 2018 East Street Arts partnered with the School of Performance and Cultural Industries and the Cultural Institute at the University of Leeds and secured funding for a collaborative doctoral scholarship. With Guild's aim '...to support artists' groups and develop sustainability', Benedetta d'Ettorre has been researching the meaning of sustainability in the cultural sector and specifically in organisations run by artists, or, artist-led spaces.

The research focuses on eight organisations, from within the Guild cohort, as case studies. This work contextualises the Guild programme's approach in response to discourses of sustainability developed in cultural policies in the UK. It argues that sustainability is often equated to the financial sustainability of the cultural sector, in other words, the capacity of arts organisations to be financially independent of public funding. Cultural policy has taken a business

development approach, using innovative business model changes, to make the cultural sector more sustainable. However, arts management and organisational research is referenced to show the limitation of this approach, highlighting the importance of the founders' values and motivations in the development and management of arts organisations. In particular, it explores the ways in which these motivations and values are key to the successes of these organisation's mission, but do not necessarily coincide with the potential for financial sustainability.

Being independently, and not publicly, funded and increasing profits by operating commercially poses problems for many arts organisations. The research shows that most founders of arts spaces were motivated to establish their organisation within the context of their locality. These motivations can be understood as 'reactive drivers'. Meaning, these organisations are often reacting to specific needs identified within the cultural ecology of their neighbourhood, town or city: increasing wider accessibility, improving inclusion and equity, providing spaces or affordable studios, developing networks or offering support for emerging and experimental practices. These issues drive artists to collaborate and/or set up organisations or projects. The produced thesis discusses how the current approach to business development fails to capture the value that these organisations add to the wider cultural ecology. The question here asks whether funders value and recognise the work of these organisations as part of the wider cultural ecology when they are creating spaces that incubate networking, production, experimentation and the showcasing work.

**Most organisations start out at a grassroots level and rely on friends and peers for support and therefore exist. The artists' motivations and their support network identify two questions;**

- **What is the value of artists' organisations?**
- **How do non financial supporters contribute to the longevity of artist-led organisations?**

The reactive drivers example a need for specific local cultural infrastructure that can support and encourage the engagement of diverse stakeholders to participate in cultural activities.

Additionally, the business models of organisations that provide and profit from rented studio spaces are financially stable, with fundraising being used to pay for other events and activities. Similarly, programme-based artists' groups and organisations could be considered financially sustainable too, so long as they are funded. This holds to question the definitions and language around how we describe artist-led spaces that are sustainably run.



- **Should the sustainability of artist-led spaces be identified whilst considering more than their financial make up?**
- **If these organisations are so precarious, what contributes to their survival and sustainability?**
- **Is the longevity of these organisations always desirable?**

Key findings from this work can be traced to organisational studies which helped to explore how organisational cultures may support the development of their sustainability. Artists' organisations often lack the resources and capacity for growth and development as they rely on the support and labour of their members and supporting peers. Establishing boundaries within the organisation to ensure that it develops independently from the founder's 'personal project' can help supporters and members share ownership. Clear communication can establish and strengthen the trust between founders, members of the space and key stakeholders, and therefore creates a strong organisational identity that inhabits shared ownership. Furthermore, the conviction and boundaries around organisational identity can help facilitate artists in communicating their work externally and attract further support from a variety of stakeholders. This decentres financial sustainability as the main goal and highlights the success and sustainability of these spaces by their merit of generating alternative kinds of value.

Support programmes should look at supporting founders to develop and establish organisational cultures and governance structures, whilst supporting artists to recognise their hybrid identity as directors/managers of organisations as

well as creative practitioners. However, not all projects or organisations are intended to last forever, similar to entrepreneurs, an artist's curiosity can often lead to new enquiries and endeavours, leaving behind the last. Ultimately, this research asks what sustainability means in the cultural sector and whether it should be reframed to reflect the artists/founders' values and ambitions.

The development of the PhD research, and its results, were shared at the Creativity, Knowledge, Cities Conference (CKC) in 2019, and at the 2021 Institute for Small Businesses and Entrepreneurship Conference. The thesis, and research, was also awarded the best paper at the Creative Industries Entrepreneurship Track during their 12th international conference on cultural policy research in 2022. Of course this work was then also presented to the Guild cohort at the 2023 residency.

Sharing and peer reviewing the research within academic networks and environments, and with the Guild cohort members, has inspired Benedetta to work with her supervisor, Dr. Jon Ward, and colleague Alice Chandler to set up a network for academics researching artists and arts organisations. In particular, feedback from Guild cohort members was instrumental when understanding the benefits of sharing research with artists and arts organisations. It helped to explore why this sharing of knowledge is not made possible and the ethics of this kind of research work. The peer network, funded by the Enhancing Research Culture Fund by Research England, engages with academics from across the University to explore ways of collaborating with artists and creative practitioners to create resources that disseminate the research back to these organisations, or collectives, in an engaging, practical and problem-solving way through focussed activities.

The artists' involvement is key in the development process of shifting their position within an extractive research process into a participatory role within a culture of collaborative work. This new way of working values the active involvement and contribution of artists from the beginning, right through to its dissemination.



PHD Researcher Benedetta Dettorre and Kate West at the Guild Leavers Do © Wes Foster



## Research: Guild x a-n

Y4

It was recognised that a-n's ongoing Assembly programme - the bringing together of artist-led organisations - would make great use of the Guild cohorts diversity in geographical location. In a closed application process, made available only to the Guild cohort, members pitched their ideas for virtual (due to COVID-19 pandemic related restrictions) assemblies.

Four members were selected: Abingdon Studios (Blackpool), Navigator North (Middlesborough), Two Queens (Leicester) and Haarlem Artspace (Matlock). Each selected cohort member had pitched ideas at locality, geographical history and cultural identity as a basis for conversations, exploring connectivity and strategising networks.



Shifting Sands Campaign Image

## Research: Guild x The Uncultured

Y4 - Y5

### Open Doors, The real cost of artist-led spaces

30 years ago East Street Arts was founded in east Leeds, in East Street Mill. The third floor of a converted mill housed an initial eight artist studios and was created by the founding, now artistic directors, Jon Wakeman and Karen Watson: mostly unpaid. Three decades later the organisation has over 25 salaried staff members and a permanent home for East Street Arts in Patrick Studios, Leeds. Jon and Karen were keen to investigate the culture of unpaid labour in artist-led spaces, having seen how this way of working had underpinned the development of East Street Arts, and likely many other organisations. They worked with The Uncultured to develop

a collaborative campaign that investigated: the unpaid time and labour in artist-led spaces; what systems are used to monitor this work; how it positively or negatively impacts the sector; and what learnings could be taken from this investigation. The data collection phase took place in early 2022 with over 250 respondents, producing a snapshot of arts labour in the UK.

Full report to be published by Autumn 2023.

## Research: Guild x InSession & Pause or Pay

Y4 - Y5

(in collaboration with Creative Scotland)

### Shifting Sands

A core aim of the Guild programme was to comment on and advocate for better postgraduate support through robust development programmes, supportive studio spaces and better integration into local arts ecology from an earlier stage. Delivering this piece of research was InSession (a learning and 'unprofessional' contemporary art practice programme that focuses on the needs of early-career practitioners working/practising in Scotland) and Pause or Pay (a UK-wide cross-university action group led

by students that emerged in April 2020 as a response to the disruption of studio-based learning by the pandemic). The research focused on 20 graduates from HE (higher education) and FE (further education) providers in Yorkshire, with partnering organisation Creative Scotland focusing on Scottish graduate development.

Full report to be published by Autumn 2023.



# Collaboration Guild x FIELD

Y4 - Y5

Having supported the delivery of a residency for artists and producers, with Two Destination Language, in spring 2021, Guild felt a similar residency model should be created for the cohort. The residency model, developed by Two Destination Language, uses slow mutual exchanges, care and guided talks to bring together a group of people eager to learn from one another. The cohort, who had only had the opportunity to meet twice prior to the pandemic, were keen to reconnect and solidify these connections going forward. Having surveyed the cohort to understand their expectations and desires for this residency, Guild settled on four key themes to be explored over four days, with guest speakers from varied organisations and backgrounds: connectivity, identity, leadership and change. Each day started with a panel discussion that was opened up to the cohort and then further explored, whilst engaging in a workshop, using rest areas to decompress and reflect. The evening events were especially considered and centred around food, allowing for organic networks to form and facilitating the exchange of experiences.

*"The conference was so worthwhile, it was great to meet again in person and there was a real sense of peer-to-peer exchange and support. I wish we could have done it yearly. I really got a lot out of it. For example, thinking about the vision, mission and values, because we had not really anything super strong or pinned down, they were still influenced by the old directors. The talks persuaded me that those things are important and it's not just about doing forms and the hard stuff, how people feel about the place, how we communicate our story and the softer things. After that, we sat down and had a big team conversation that helped us to reframe what we are doing by clearly defining our three areas of activity (studios, in-house programme, community co-created*

*programme). I think lack of clarity has been a barrier to us getting funding and because we've got so little staffing provision we tend to work independently and just get on with things. When we sit down to talk about the vision, mission and values, we have something that we can all share and use to check what we are doing is fitting. It's an objective thing that tells us whether we're on the right path or not. Something I took away from one of the talks was the question, "Is your organisation an objective entity or is it actually a vehicle for the directors?".*  
- Assembly House



Lady Kitt and speakers, Guild Residency

Theme	Facilitator
Connectivity	Sarah Davies (CWN) Vivienne Ridley (CWN) Marcelo (Social Art Network)
Identity	Michael Barns-Wynters (RED) Jon Wakeman (ESA) Chinasa Vivian Exugha (LADA) Benedetta d'Ettorre (Academic)
Leadership	Keisha Thompson (Contact Theatre) Leed Beech (Feral Art School) Xiaowen Zhu (ESEA) Thanh Sinden (ESEA)
Change	Teresa Cisneros (Wellcome) Cecilia Wee (YVAN Report) Tracey Gentles (Something To Aim For)

The residency was visually documented by artist Sarah Smizz & Videographer Connor Orten.





# Research: Guild x The Unlimited

## Y2 - Y3

The Guild team committed to exploring accessibility in artist-led spaces, and recruited Unlimited as a Guild partner to ensure they had a knowledgeable voice in the room. This partnership resulted in the development and delivery of a two-day event held at East Street Arts, in January 2020, that aimed to explore access within the context of studio provision in the UK. The day enabled participants to think about creative and practical solutions to the barriers they face in designing great spaces for visual arts, and provided a safe and supportive environment for artists to feed into East Street Arts' Guild programme, asking questions such as:

- What does 'artist-led' mean?
- What does this term help us to understand about a space/organisation?
- What does accessibility look like in these spaces?
- What are good examples of accessibility?
- What can we learn from other sectors, or art platforms?

## Y5

Unlimited has been exploring the entrenched 'do something for nothing' culture within the UK arts sector, having initially worked with disabled artists and researched how prevalent it was throughout their work. This is something that impacts all artists, however, it was through the experiences of disabled artists that Unlimited began this work as they were subject to this more often.

Instead of recommending immediate changes straight away, Unlimited wanted to consult organisations using an approach that would help them self-reflect on their own practices whereby they may be asking people to do something for nothing.

In collaboration, Guild and Unlimited took a small group of organisations to present their developed work and to identify what is missing, what may be wrong and what can be made more purposeful. The aim wasn't to ask organisations to make dramatic changes overnight, as these changes are mostly unsustainable, but to instead encourage them to challenge and check their own ways of working to embed change thoughtfully, having understood how their systems and practices may be exploitive and extractive.

*"Our campaign, 'Nothing for Nothing', arose as more and more disabled people spoke up about the pressure of being continually asked to do stuff for free, and how it impacted on them both financially but also in relation to confidence and self esteem. We know it's complicated – our culture sector has many areas where practice is based on exploitation – but that doesn't mean it can't be challenged. Working with Guild – and groups supported by Guild – means we can connect up with a wider range of artist-led groups and really listen to their perspective and experiences. This is vital and valuable as many consultation processes only work with larger, more formally constituted organisations. But artist led organisations are where the heart is – and include those who are often the most poorly funded. Guild has championed these organisations and helped provide both structure and support in ways that have been open, transparent, accessible and inclusive." - Jo Verrent*





# Collaboration Guild x Short Supply

YS

As the Guild programme neared the end of delivery, the team turned their attention to the alumni of the Guild cohort. During this time, an investigatory research piece was instigated, looking at support for graduates. Naturally, the team began to ask questions about the continued support they would offer to the cohort. What did it look like? Was there a demand for it? How would the accumulated knowledge be shared? How could the cohort continue to support one another?

Enter Short Supply: an artist-led collective from Manchester. They forge many supportive environments for artists in the north and have great expertise in bringing like-minded people together to create supportive ecosystems for new and underrepresented artists. Applying this skillset to the Guild cohort, they devised a one-day event that took place

in Birmingham, and used the aforementioned provocations as a basis for conversation whilst also celebrating the past five years of mutual aid.

*"Artist-led spaces bring an astonishing level of value to the creative industries. They provide the foundation for many creative careers, introducing new ways of thinking and making space for artists who may not feel included anywhere else. It was a pleasure to work with so many spaces and organisations that we admire at the Guild Leaver's Do – making grassroots projects sustainable starts with valuing them. I hope these organisations keep going, continue to feel valued and value each other, and long may programmes like Guild exist to reinforce that value when artist-led spaces need a reminder of how important their role is in this industry". - Short Supply*



Guild Leavers Do © Wes Foster





## 5. Guild: Evaluation

### Data

99

applications were received spanning over 25 local authorities

25

groups became members of the Guild Cohort

20

members were initially selected through open call

3

members lost their space

2

members are in the process of owning their own building

8

studio swaps were conducted by members

4

members have changed their governance model or formed new legal entities

35

away days were spent by the Guild team visiting the cohort members

5

members were recruited through the Accelerator Programme

5

members are currently not operating

2

members have found a new space to operate from

£110,000+ of seed funding was distributed to 11 members

£50,000 was spent on designed development activities

£28,000+ funded 22 commissions/virtual residencies

£75,000 was made available for mentoring

70

hours of mentoring was delivered

21

Go See Fund visits were conducted

30

hours (average) one-to-one support given by Guild to each Cohort member

27

Guild conversations were facilitated in total

17

1 hour sessions were conducted during series 1

1

artist was commissioned

6

40-minute 'In-Practice' podcast episodes were recorded

4

research projects were instigated

5

three-hour sessions conducted during series 2 with 15 guest speakers

10

Guest speakers, from the sector were involved in 'In Practice'

10

HE & FE institutions were engaged by Shifting Sands

3

conferences were attended, to present the work of the PhD

1

'Best paper' award and 1 Research England funding award connected to the PhD

270

responses were collected for the Open Doors 'Unpaid Labour' survey

50

artist-led spaces, across the UK, received a Guild Conversations publication



## 5.1 What we've learned

The evaluation of Guild is a complex task, made difficult by a number of internally and externally challenging events. The development and results of Guild need to be contextualised within its five-year time-span that was heavily impacted by external factors that influenced, and sometimes dictated, what was possible. The withdrawal of the UK from the European Union, the COVID-19 pandemic and the cost of living crisis affected everyone, and the impact of these major events on the cultural sector have been evidenced and exist elsewhere. Restrictions, limitations and uncertainties have affected the delivery of Guild and likewise the activities of the cohort members. Despite this, Guild has adapted and persisted which was a challenge in itself.

**When interviewing the Guild team, and the cohort, four themes emerged from the reviewed data: the limits and benefits of diversity in the cohort; the strengths and weaknesses of the support programme; the impact of the pandemic; and sectoral partnership.**

Overall, the programme achieved all the objectives it set out in the funding application. However, this publication reflects on the quality of its success. One of the main objectives of the programme was to build and share best practice. The facets of its success and failures are explored to understand what has and hasn't worked. Guild's two-fold nature as a Sector Support Organisation, with an aim to transform the landscape of artists' spaces through developing their resilience and sustainability, requires multiple voices and opinions to be considered in order to accurately gauge its successes, impacts and failures.

On one hand, there is the Guild cohort with their needs, ambitions and expectations; on the other, there are the partners and wider sector with its resources and potential. But there is also East Street Arts with its ambitions leading on Guild, a first of its kind programme, and this experience in relation to their existing and future work to support the sector. The mapping and review of the programme in this publication show the range of activities of Guild and the case studies highlight the positive impact of particular activities and development actions. However, the evaluation of the project also reveals some weaknesses that are going to be discussed and contextualised in this section.

Quotes throughout the evaluation section were received anonymously from the Guild cohort.

Rising Sun ©Andy Wicks





## The Guild Cohort

One key aim of Guild was to foster relationships between the members of the cohort and establish a network.

The diversity of the Guild cohort has both enabled many connections and in some cases hindered the process. The members of the Guild cohort were recruited through an open call application process. The programme of development and support was open to artists' groups working together, be that in a managed space or by working in more nomadic ways. The selection process ensured that the cohort's make-up was diverse in terms of scale, experience, age, remit, artistic practice and location.

The initial 20 groups spanned from recent art school graduates to groups that formed in their later years after university; from organisations operating in studios and project spaces to touring mixed art forms and programming; from an organisation led by its two founders to an arts centre led by a large group of volunteers. The rationale for bringing together such a different group into one cohort was to facilitate the sharing of information and experience, and peer-learning. This has been successfully facilitated by building relationships over time and by dedicated activities like the virtual studio swaps. Few studio swaps were fruitful and only worked when the groups found common ground, relative to the point at which their organisation was on their development journey. The impact on Two Queens, Proforma, Bon Volks, Bricks, Navigator North is a great example of how these organisations have connected through similar experiences of managing spaces and being in a moment of change through the acquisition of a different space or considering changes in governance and legal set-ups.

*"It would have been good if the people involved had a higher level of expertise in the stuff that was delivered. Obviously it's difficult because within the cohort, you know, no two*

*groups of the same. The range of stages that groups are at is really wide. There are those groups that have got buildings, groups that haven't, stuff like that. Maybe it would have been more effective if there was a sort of a narrower range of organisations involved? Say, if it was purely limited to being building focused and capital projects or securing buildings and premises and stuff like that. For us, perhaps that would have been more useful."*

*"I know that other organisations were at different stages and there is a majority of organisations that are studio space providers who, when we all first started, were in a different place. We've all obviously grown over the last five years and I think that's great and brilliant. Some organisations seem to have done extremely well. Wonderful to hear. But it always felt like we are not amongst peers. We are very different. At the first event, we made some connections and we were meant to visit each other but I think nothing ever happened because of the pandemic."*



Stuffed Launch, K6 Gallery © Mia Delve

As a lot of attention was directed to space either by the members or the Guild programme itself, organisations that did not manage studios or lost their space struggled to connect with the rest of the members. In this sense, the diversity of the cohort limited the extent to which a network was formed, and was also influenced by the limited capacity of organisations to dedicate time to these relationships in addition to nurturing their existing networks:

*"...it's no fault of Guild that we haven't been able to access as much as we would like to. It's just a result of being too busy with day-to-day stuff"*

Some organisations felt 'ahead' of their peers and that they did not have the capacity to mentor their peers or that engaging in such relationships was not going to be mutually and equally beneficial:

*"We felt that it was not going to be a two-ways relationship, we have limited capacity and we felt that we were going to contribute more than receiving"*

Few opportunities to meet and connect with each other prior to this initiative, the Guild Halls meetings were meant to serve but poor attendance hindered these connections. The pandemic has limited the extent of face-to-face interactions, most groups found these encounters to be more meaningful (even in the case of the successful virtual studio swaps, they have then been followed up by in-person visits that felt necessary to "see and have a feeling of what others are doing").

*"It would be nicer to be more connected with the other groups. It felt like that didn't quite occur, but I think that was actually a COVID thing. I think if we'd had more meetups in person that would have fostered more conversations like and then more connections*



Guild Induction Day ©Ndrika Anyika

*and more follow ons. So I don't feel like there was a connection, a big connection between us."*

*"I think COVID did play a massive part in stopping us getting that initial connection and a lot of those meetings would have been really helpful. We couldn't find a date for the studio swap and then it just disappeared. It just went away. We just couldn't find the day. It was just disappointing. One thing I would say about that actually is the three-way thing, that's a problem. Probably it would have been easier in pairs."*

In terms of creating networks, the Go See funding has been used both to enable in-person visits between members but also to connect with other organisations outside of the Guild cohort. If on one hand, the cohort was 'too diverse' in terms of scale, it was not diverse from the point of view of backgrounds, ethnicities and supporting artists with diverse access needs and disabilities. This issue was identified at a structural level due to inequalities in the sector and the lack of suitable physical spaces. The Accelerator Programme was implemented half-way through Guild to expand the cohort and welcomed in five organisations that could be supported to develop and increase the accessibility of the sector.



## Support and development

To deliver a bespoke programme of support, Guild tested a flexible and responsive structure. They were influenced by changes of staff and adapting to the pandemic, however initially the language of the programme suggested a more formalised and structured approach.

At the launch of Guild, the programme included 'masterclasses' and initial away days indicated a formal assessment of needs, tailored support programmes complemented by training and teaching. The Guild Conversations replaced the masterclasses in inviting external experts to deliver training. However, the change of direction was not always clearly communicated to the cohort and this has impacted their experience.

*"The launch day, I remember it so much because it was very much what I expected Guild to be. It really aligned with why we applied for it in the first place. Then it was not always easy to understand what was going on."*

*"Sometimes it felt like it was hands off and I think that it wasn't exactly clear what was happening at some points."*



Fish Factory Open Day

Eventually, the distribution of funding through dedicated development activities such as commissions, virtual residencies, mentoring and Go See Fund have enabled the organisations to work on their own bespoke development needs. Feedback from the interviews highlighted a desire for a formal initial external assessment of their needs that could have helped to set out a clear development plan.

*"It didn't feel like there was that kind of mentoring, we had to say what we needed rather than somebody say this is probably what you need. I think it needs to be a balance of that, like 'you feel like you need this, but our assessment would be that these things might be needed'."*

*"We'd like more of that kind of support...for example a yearly check-in, like a health check for the organisation from an external point of view could be really useful."*

To assess needs, the Guild team would have probably needed to be bigger or to set aside resources to bring in consultants/mentors at the start or allow colleagues from East Street Arts to engage more regularly with the cohort

and provide their expertise on specific areas such as space, fundraising, programming. An element to be considered within the project is how bespoke support is negotiated between all stakeholders. Feedback from the participants highlighted the desire for more direct guidance from the Guild team. On the other hand, the Guild programme had to balance its own agency to enable the groups to identify their own needs for self-development without taking an imposing position. The evaluation brought mixed results around this balancing act. Though, not all groups remained engaged in the same way with the programme which may have inhibited them from seeking help and when support was offered it was not always taken up. However, the Guild team was a reference point for some of the groups to discuss ideas, get feedback and feel less isolated:

*"In meetings we had during COVID when they were very kindly checking in on us and it was more like a pastoral check in like, is everything ok? How are you guys coping? And it was really good. It felt really supportive."*

*"I think a lot of my engagement with Guild has been in one to one conversations with Guild staff. There are times where the organisation could have disbanded, but actually we've had a level of resilience through that mentoring that has allowed us to respond smartly."*

The distribution of funding in small pots was one of the elements that had the most impact on the development of the groups. A recurrent theme in the interviews emerged around the opportunity to apply for this funding and being sure that whatever they proposed was going to be accepted. The trust and freedom that this allowed was greatly appreciated as a way to build self-confidence and enable fast and slow paces of development. At times, funding was sometimes released as a 'fast-response' to

immediately support the groups to cover core costs and respond to emergency situations.

*"I think we did almost everything but we never travelled anywhere. Apart from that, we got everything else. So in terms of funding, it was really, really, positive because they were very flexible with how these funds could be used. So through COVID times, whenever we needed to just use it on core costs, we were allowed to do it, which no funder ever does. So, you know, that flexibility was really great. We've asked in the past if we can change what we use the money for and they said yes, no problem at all."*



Guild Induction Day ©Ndrika Anyika

Other times, the groups waited to use funds until efficient ways to use them would formalise. For example, paying the directors' time over a certain period to research and develop ideas or waiting some time to use the Go See fund after it was made available so that it could be used when a meaningful connection was made to visit other artists and organisations.

*"I wouldn't have any idea what to do about it. Two months later, a project would come up and I'd be like, oh look, we can put these two projects together because there's a fund here and there's a fund there that we can use."*



While groups could decide how to use this money, the purpose of the activities and the follow-up check-ins with the team ensured that there were boundaries around how to use the money. This provided guidance and a framework that helped to shape the development activities, one comment explained this:

*“They could have just given us £10,000 at the beginning and checked on us once a year. Instead, we knew that different pots were available at different times, for different things, so it became easier to be strategic about them.”*

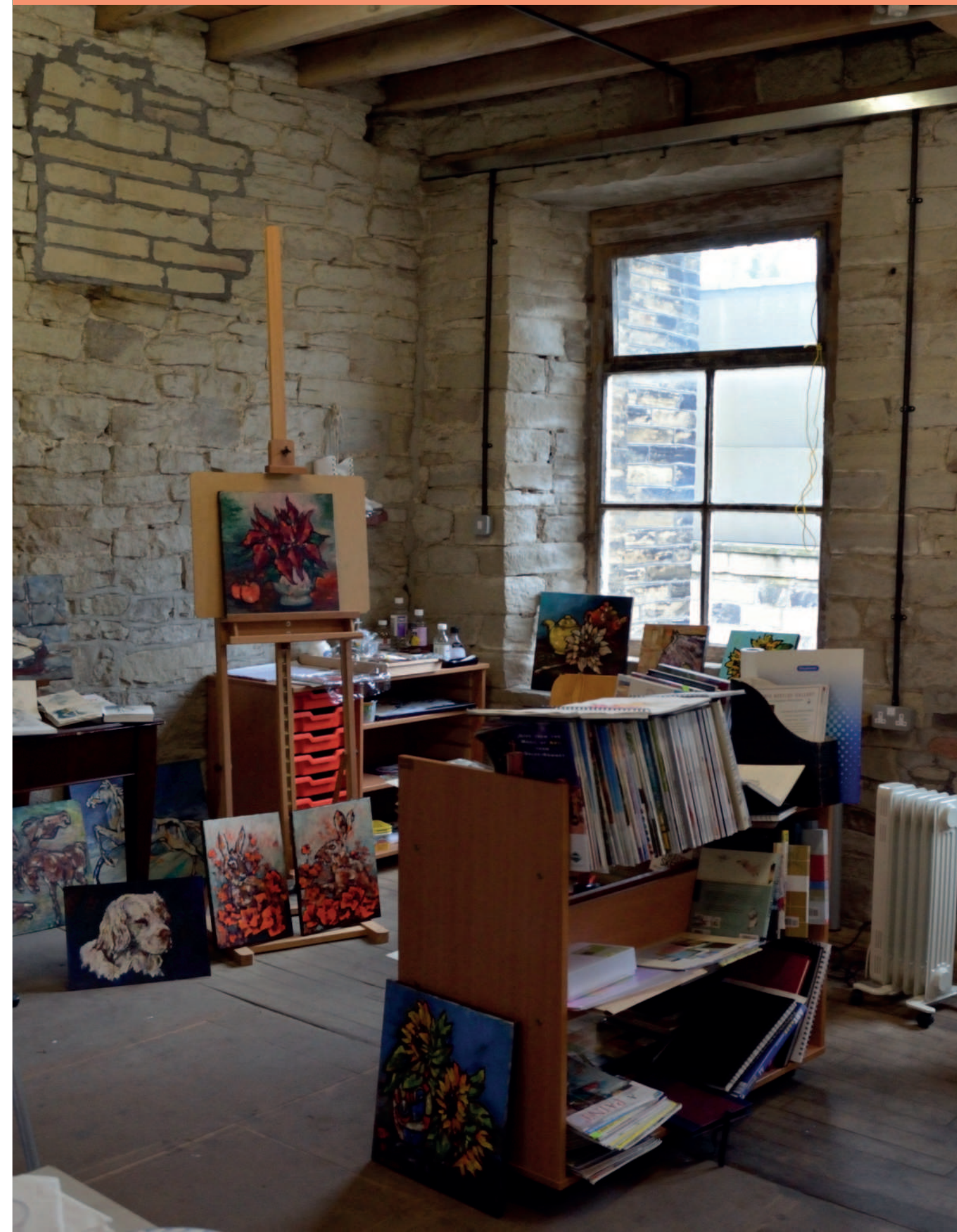
*“The funding has been really crucial to us because it’s been very free and pushes us to be creative.”*

Being part of Guild has also helped the groups to add weight to their reputation and validate their work. Some groups spoke about how it was possible to leverage on the connection with a more established organisation like East Street Arts to gain support and recognition from other organisations.

*“Well, I could say to partners I’ve had a conversation with East Street Arts as part of the Guild program and they feel what I am working on would be a valuable project. It gave me a context within which to articulate my practice to other partnerships. So in some ways it gave us an ease to leverage other partners because I think organisations sometimes have a lack of trust for individual artists or small organisations. So this affiliation allowed us added gravitas. It would be wonderful if we didn’t need the permission, like a seal of approval from a big organisation but in this sense it’s definitely super helpful”.*

However, not all groups remained engaged in the same way with the programme which may have inhibited them from seeking help. An element to be considered within the project is how bespoke support is negotiated

between all stakeholders. Feedback from the participants highlighted the desire for more direct guidance from the Guild team. On the other hand, the Guild programme had to balance its own agency to enable the groups to identify their own needs for self-development without taking an imposing position. The evaluation brought mixed results around this balancing act and the question for the Guild team was around the time when the support was offered but not taken up: whether some support activities were not wanted or, perhaps, fell outside of their control due to the groups’ wider commitments and capacity. If partial engagement is also caused by lack of resources, how can support programmes mitigate against this? Participation in Guild activities was remunerated and this proved to be an efficient way to remove some barriers to engagement. Though, many organisations only have one or two key members of staff that are paid, therefore their time is extremely limited and expanding their staff capacity is something needed but difficult to achieve without structural funding. This type of funding would allow the groups to have the capacity to work less on programme delivery and more on developing earned income and funding streams to sustain their activities.





## COVID-19 Pandemic

Research done internally by the Guild team across the cohort resonates with wider research done across the culture and creative industries.

**A survey from April 2020 with 10 respondents from the cohort showed that:**

- **50% of the staff was homeworking and a large number was identified as unable to work due to illness or lack of equipment**
- **90% said they could not continue to work without extra support, this was also due to notable variations of technological proficiency or access to equipment amongst the organisations**
- **In terms of employment, it emerged that 33.3% made redundancies while 66.6% were unsure whether redundancies will have to be made**
- **63.3% have had to cancel or postpone contracts with freelance staff and only 36.4% of those were confident to be able to honour fees/payments**

**All respondents had picked up additional working hours to access funding, assess risks, support other artists and secure premises, while:**

- **63.6% staff were home carers or caregivers**
- **72% were parents or guardians of children being home-schooled due to COVID-19**
- **36.4% of staff have secondary jobs as key workers**

However, through the support from Guild and the implementation of government measures to support the sector, some organisations took the lock-down period and the pandemic to work on their development. After the initial period of uncertainty and emergency responses, the following two years of reduced activities allowed many members of the cohort to focus on the bits of planning, work, research and development that would get sidelined during normal times. The groups identified specific needs around their development and the Guild Conversations were designed to respond to them with a vast range of themes and training covered. They allowed the Guild members to pick and choose what was relevant. Some

members connected during those events and the time in lockdown also facilitated getting to know each other online.

While not all sessions were useful for everyone, feedback points at the fact that providing online activities and funding to work on the commissions have helped to maintain the directors engagement and focus on the development of their organisations. This should not be taken for granted as the pandemic has affected the objectives, ways of life and professional ambitions of many individuals. For example, much of the changes and development in organisations like Proforma, Two Queens, Ort, Navigator North, Assembly House happened during this period.

*"I thought all the studio holders were going to leave because they were going to say that they could not afford it but we ended up getting a lot of free grants and the studio holders were also supported by the government. Actually the impact of the cost of living crisis has affected all of us way more than the pandemic. If anything, the pandemic allowed us to get funding and have the time to develop our work. We were still allowed to open as a specialist workplace. That was absolutely amazing for the business. Financially, I think if that hadn't happened, we wouldn't be in such a good place, which is kind of ironic."*

## Partnerships

Guild existed as a Sector Support Organisation and its remit extended beyond the cohort. Partnerships and collaborations with other organisations around the sector are crucial. The programme started with partners a-n (Artists Information Company), Key Fund, University of Leeds and Stockholm Institute for the Environment. However, not all connections brought impact. Some partnerships had to be cut while redistributing funding during the pandemic, and as the programme bounced back new connections were established with Unlimited, the Creative Workspace Network, Locality and Creative Scotland. a-n has worked with Guild members to host their programme of Assemblies, this is a positive outcome as it strengthens the connections with other artists in the sector to the specific support that a-n will be able to provide after the end of Guild. Unlimited has been leading research to support disabled artists and Creative Scotland has supported the work of InSession in researching how graduates can enter the cultural and creative sectors.

*"Unlimited commissions disabled artists and we aim to do that until the rest of the cultural sector does. We shouldn't need to be here but due to systemic and structural ableism we are needed to commission, develop and support disabled artists and connect them with the sector – and to do the same in reverse, connecting the sector to disabled artists. Everything we do is ultimately to change the sector for better – making it more open, accessible, inclusive, and intersectional."*

*"Guild is also on a mission for change, one that we fully support. Artist-led spaces, places and initiatives have been under-resourced for years and Guild has really enabled vision, knowledge, and skills to transform this sector – I'll be sad to see it go."*



## 5.2. Internal review

This section of the evaluation looks at how the project was reviewed internally to understand how this programme worked, including its challenges and its successes. This reflection can influence the sector both in terms of what organisations can do to support each other and how funding can be invested. The evaluation process was a way to **highlight successes and learn through failure**. Not everything worked out as expected in Guild, but which organisation or project can ever say that?

The parts of the programme that did not quite work out as expected are a treasure trove of learnings. As we care about the survival of the artist-led sector and nourishing a healthy cultural ecology, it is vital to collect information about our successes and failures and to pass on the knowledge.

Talking about failures can be a difficult conversation, a pair of objective eyes are necessary to be able to engage with critical perspectives about your own work, so we asked the team at **FailSpace** to guide us through this process. FailSpace — also known as Cultural Participation: Stories of Success, Histories of Failure — is an AHRC-funded research project exploring how the cultural sector can better recognise, acknowledge and learn from failure, particularly when undertaking work intended to diversify and grow the people who are taking part in subsidised cultural activities.

Over the four years of research, Professors Leila Jancovich and David Stevenson found that one of the key barriers to talking openly about failures was that many cultural professionals consider success and failure as binary opposites and as such were unwilling to label their work as a 'failure'.

However, they argue that very little of what we do could be called an outright success or outright failure and suggest that rather

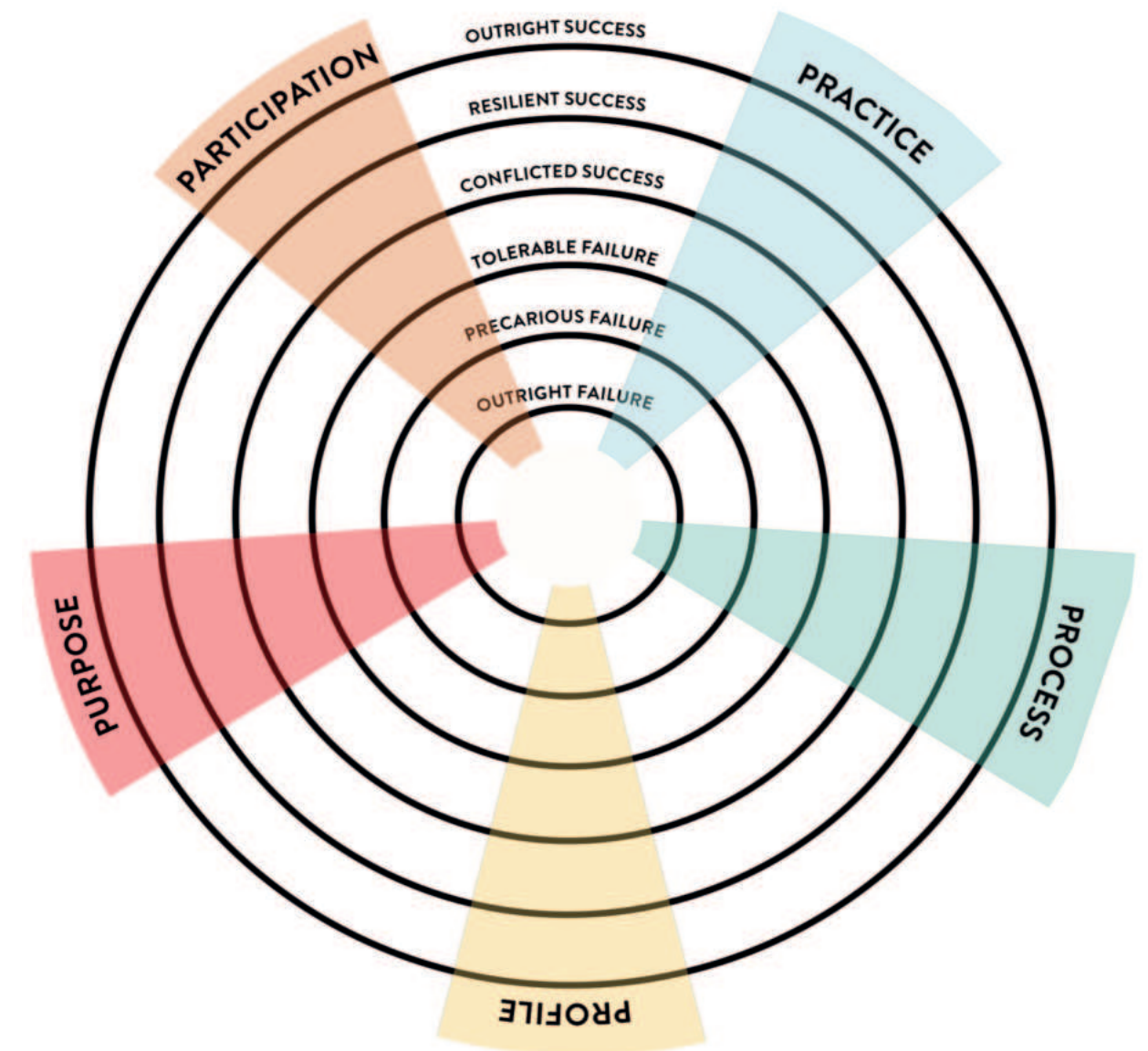
than asking if something is a success or a failure, we ask what is success or failure for whom? To what degree? And to what effect? In collaboration with Dr. Lucy Wright and Malaika Cunningham they developed a toolkit intended to help cultural professionals talk about failures in a more nuanced way so that moving forward we see **learning from failure as an important component of achieving success**.

They identified five different elements of cultural projects that people would discuss when reflecting on their relative success or failure: **purpose** (stated aims, objectives, and outcomes of project), **process** (the design and implementation/delivery), **participation** (who participates in the project and the engagement of stakeholders), **practice** (creative and cultural intentions/aspirations), **profile** (reputation and future prospects). These elements are then discussed and evaluated according to six degrees of failure/success: **outright failure, precarious failure, tolerable failure, conflicted success, resilient success, outright success**.



Karen Watson & Kate West, Fail Safe Workshop ©Wes Foster

## Failspace Toolkit



In the sessions with FailSpace we have analysed the objectives and aims of Guild as stated in the applications for the Sector Support Organisation funding to Arts Council England and discussed their degree of success and failure.



## Purpose

Objective: Deliver a bespoke, pick-and-mix accelerator business programme that will affect the practice of 10,000 artists

Degree: Conflicted success

The programme delivered some bespoke elements for the Guild cohort, however embedding the bespoke element in the overall design and planning of the programme was a challenge due to the diversity of the cohort. Moreover, the planned in-person activities faced a halt during the pandemic. However, the pandemic and the knowledge gained while delivering the programme allowed the programme to be responsive to the needs of the cohort in a bespoke manner. Measuring if the programme affected the practice of 10,000 artists is difficult, the Guild conversations, a-n Assemblies, Hive and the various partnerships can contribute to this goal. In time, with an effective use and distribution of the resource page born out of Guild this objective could be achieved. To be a resilient success, the programme would have been delivered as set out and there was clear evidence of how the programme affected the practice of at least half of the targeted number of artists.

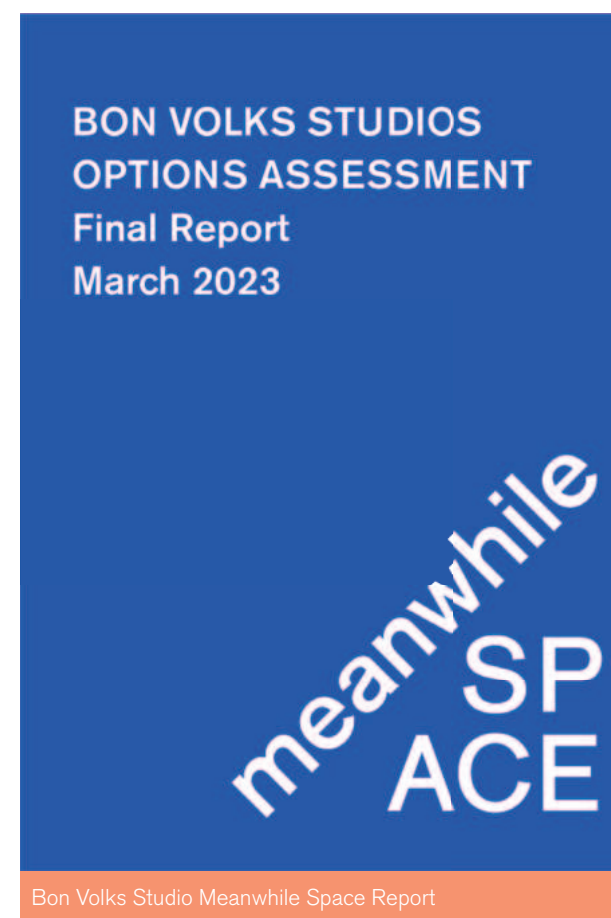
## Process

Objective: Implement an evaluation programme that will give us unique intelligence and facilitate better sharing of good practice

Degree: Between conflicted/resilient success

The evaluation of the project as carried out between October 2019 and February 2020

is happening retrospectively and not during the programme as intended. At the time of the FailSpace workshop it was not possible to judge on the extent of the intelligence gathered and if it would facilitate better sharing practices. Therefore it was positioned between a conflicted and resilient success. The distribution and dissemination of this publication and the resource page, alongside the impact of the Hive conference can contribute to making this objective a resilient success.



## Participation

Objective: Directly support 10 spaces through access to resources

Degree: Conflicted success

This objective aimed at supporting 10 spaces to secure a space or develop a capital project by fundraising to distribute £100,000 seed funding. The project overachieved by engaging 11 organisations and raised £110,000 but the team feels the groups could have used the funding more strategically and the use of this resource is bringing mixed results. The team would consider it a resilient success if all groups engaged with the resources in the envisaged ways.

Objective: Embed research, advocacy and knowledge exchange to develop clear and reasonable recommendations for local and national stakeholders \*Note this objective is split between participation and practice

Degree: Outright success

The team included the PhD research in the participation element of the project as the researcher had a sustained engagement with the programme through its life, resulting in a successful partnership with the University of Leeds. The PhD was considered as an outright success because it will be published by the end of 2023 and the research has been embedded by involving the doctoral student to curate the Hive conference for a national audience.

It also brought impact back to the University as the researcher received further funding by Research England to share knowledge and research around best practice for academics working in collaboration with artists and arts organisations. The research received acknowledgement by academic peers with a best paper award. The PhD has also been shared with a variety of publics at academic

conferences, with the cohort at the 2022 Guild Residency and will be presented to the wider sector at the Hive conference.



## Practice

**Objective:** Embed research, advocacy and knowledge exchange to develop clear and reasonable recommendations for local and national stakeholders

**Degree:** Resilient success

The Guild campaigns and research have been considered as part of the practice element of the project as they were specifically conceived to research and produce recommendations to impact the practice of artists and of the different players in the sector. They are considered a resilient success because the research and campaigns have taken place, however the engagement with the sector has been partial and clear recommendations have not been developed. Though, East Street Arts acknowledges that the difficulty around developing this specific piece work also comes from the fact that working on campaigns is something new for the organisation. This means that Guild and East Street Arts learned about planning and delivering them while working on them, which means that they tested this strand of work and gained knowledge that can be applied in the future.

**Objective:** Work with 10 universities/colleges to take learning into graduate art courses and influence professional support modules

**Degree:** Conflicted success

This objective was achieved by engaging 10 universities, however the nature of this work changed from influencing professional support modules to researching the impact they have on students. This objective has the potential to become an outright success after the review of the collected data and an understanding of how professional support modules could be improved.

**Objective:** Launch a unique, sector-specific, asset-based toolkit that will enable us to cascade the learning and help to inform local authorities and other stakeholders

**Degree:** Conflicted success

This has been positioned as a conflicted success with the potential to become a resilient success as the toolkit is taking shape as the Guild resource page but it will be launched at the Hive conference, therefore the knowledge has not cascaded yet. When the resource page will be launched this objective can be reviewed, it would be considered a resilient success if the knowledge gathered is not as comprehensive as originally planned, however it cascades to inform local authorities and other stakeholders with the information it covers.

**Objective:** Increase understanding and share intelligence in artists' business models that operate within non-arts sectors

**Degree:** Tolerable failure

This objective was inspired by the different income streams that East Street Arts has been able to develop and the will to share expertise on different business models. Partial and responsive intelligence around business models has been gathered but not in a comprehensive or structured way. This knowledge has been shared but not systematically, often only in one-to-one conversations. The team felt that the understanding of the business model did not increase considerably. However, it was felt that this was a tolerable failure given the constraints posed by the transferability and application of non-art sector business models to artists' organisations.

## Profile

**Objective:** Strengthen visual and live art partnerships in order to reduce duplication, pool resources and expertise and give unification to the sector voice

**Degree:** Conflicted success

This objective was regarded a success as Guild has been able to strengthen partnerships between visual and live art by pulling resources together. It also avoided duplication by addressing organisations and collectives specifically rather than individual artists. However, while connected and aware of the other organisations supporting the sector, the team felt that many of the organisations share funders and aims but operate idiosyncratically, hence they were not able to unify the voice of the sector. Rather than a tolerable failure, the understanding of the idiosyncrasies around the sector makes this objective a conflicted success.



Masego performs 'Be Still', MAFWA



## FailSpace Final reflections

By and large the programme has achieved all its objectives and it can be framed as a success. In fact, most objectives were delivered but the internal review shows they were achieved not quite in the ways that were envisaged.

It would be unrealistic to expect a multi-year live project such as Guild to have a fixed nature and its remit as a Sector Support Organisation makes it an even more dynamic project, needing to respond to how the sector evolves. The attainability of the original objectives also had to be reviewed against the impact of the pandemic and it should be noted that work on four out of nine objectives is still ongoing, thus they have the potential to become 'more successful'.

The FailSpace sessions supported the team to reflect on the quality of the project's success as conflicted, unpicking its complexity and ambitions. The team's internal perspectives on the challenges and the efforts to realise particular activities made them think they were not as impactful as they could have been and yet, on the other hand, the same project may have been viewed differently by participants reflecting positively on its impact. The FailSpace workshops helped to compare these narratives, and the nuances that surround them. This methodology for self-reflection allowed the team to work towards and, in many respects achieve, a final objective included in the Sector Support Organisation application "...to assess, identify and prepare for demand and need post-Guild".

Setting up Guild as a Sector Support Organisation presented various challenges but it also demonstrated the experience and learning accumulated over the years by East Street Arts supporting artists and organisations. The experience of launching a pilot project of this kind makes visible the extent to which Guild was only possible

within a larger organisation like East Street Arts. Guild relied on the wider East Street Arts teams for finance, administration, communication and general expertise around different areas that would have, otherwise, required a much bigger investment from the start. This is something to consider when thinking strategically about who can deliver sector support and how.



Pamela Crowe, Fail Safe Workshop © Wes Foster

The nature of Guild as a Sector Support Organisation affected from the start its visibility. Being its main remit to provide support meant that a lot of Guild's work has been invisible, functioning as a catalyst and enabler of others' work. Indeed, East Street Arts' experience around support is rooted in informal, often invisible acts of support and care that span from sharing intelligence during a phone call to giving a word of encouragement. As the cultural sector functions as an ecosystem, led by individuals and organisations, it is often difficult to identify this invisible work and labour that function as a specific catalyst for change. For such a long project, an end of project

evaluation can only yield partial results, while its impact would need to be measured with a longitudinal study. The impact case studies are a good example of how a conversation that happened once in the past can have an impact on a specific strand of development that comes to effect years later. Measuring the impact or the value of this informal support is virtually impossible in real life situations, though it is crucial when trying to understand how to support the sector. Many groups in the Guild cohort benefitted from the peer-support through Guild, which increased their confidence and the exchange of ideas. This brings two questions around how this kind of support is valued: How can the impact of less visible forms of support be measured and evidenced? What time scales are available and how is success articulated?

However, with more, or less, visible and direct impact, Guild has continued to provide support to its cohort and the sector at large for the last five years. This may have not had a consistent impact across the cohort but, for instance, the 12 organisations interviewed for this publication report that they feel more stable and sustainable. Some organisations

have taken on, or are considering to take on risks and grow considerably, while others have been working to keep stability. Some of these organisations are incredibly promising and show the potential to become flagship examples of community engaged and community-led organisations, others have expanded their reach and support for artists, while others continue to play a smaller but key role in the sustainability of their local cultural ecosystem. Other organisations will close or struggle to survive and a programme like Guild allows one to have a deeper knowledge to investigate the extent to which organisational practices and meanwhile spaces, among other factors, have an impact on their survival.

Reflecting on the failures and learnings of Guild can also be a challenge due to the structure in which it was presented - a pilot project. It was difficult to find comparable projects relating to scope, scale and duration for which to benchmark. The hope is that being open and sharing these considerations will lead to shared learning across the sector, providing a sustainable infrastructure on which to build.



Kate West, Benedetta Dettorre & Joanna Jowett, Fail Safe Workshop © Wes Foster



## 6.3. Recommendations

### For internal delivery:

Ensure diversity is at the forefront of the selection process and built into all aspects of programme planning and delivery.

Resource a Sector Support programme in line with scalability and ambition.

Ensure open and transparent communication is applied to all stakeholders - continually reassessing interpretation.

Consider expectations around a unified sector advocacy voice.

Continue to fund development work for artist-led spaces, without the pressure of specific outputs.

Continue to provide opportunities for networking which benefit peer-learning and sharing of resources.

Assess the level of support offered and if this is sustainable over a long period of time.

Adapt to the tempo of an artist-led space, allowing for times of dormancy and increased activity.

Target a limited number of areas across the UK for deeper understanding of locality to ensure significant impact whilst building national networks.

Devise a comms strategy to better articulate unseen areas of support.

### For the sector:

Recognise the often invisible labour carried out within artist-led spaces, which support the development of the overall sector.

Explore ways in which the sector can help build capacity to network.

Review the impact of localised support hubs, utilising NPOs in those localities.

Ensure collaboration with artists and academia are central to the commissioning of toolkits and online resources to share best practice.

Include diverse voices from all aspects of the sector at policy level.

Recognise the importance of artist-led spaces in graduate support programmes

Collaborate with civic stakeholders to better understand the importance of providing creative workspaces to aid socio and economic development.

Understand the barriers and provide opportunities for artists from global majority backgrounds to lead on the development of artist-led spaces.

Look at ways artist-led spaces can pool resources (staffing, funding & capital)

Continue to research international best practices around business models and sustainable studios, find opportunities for collaboration and shared learning.





## 6. Guild: Legacy

### Hive

YS

In May 2023, marking the end of Guild, the team at East Street Arts will collaborate with PhD researcher, Benedetta d'Ettorre, to curate and produce a conference. The conference is an opportunity to celebrate the end of the Guild programme and welcome the beginning of new and continued conversations about the future of artist-led spaces and their support structures.

The doctoral research completed alongside the Guild programme and the additional research commissioned, conducted by the Uncultured and In Sessions, is a starting point from which the cohort, other artist-led organisations and the wider sector can begin to reflect on the collective learning. Specifically, the sustainability of artist-led spaces, unpaid labour and the provision for arts graduates once they have completed their formal education. These three pieces of research are interconnected. They show the different facets of our sector alongside: the precarity of temporary spaces; the roles that artist-led organisations play in local and national cultural ecosystems; and the barriers they face in creating more inclusive and diverse workforces.

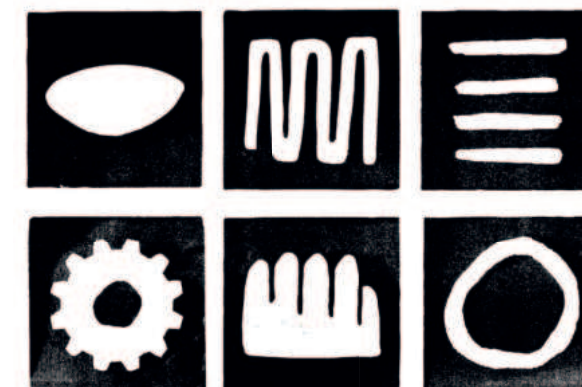
The conference is, then, conceived as a hive [bee hive] for artists and artist-led spaces to come together and share experiences, expertise, challenges and practices. Hives, whether created artificially or by the bees themselves using wood, straw or other found materials, are structures that support and protect the bees as they live and work. Hives are delicate ecosystems and can be used, as a metaphor, to parallel the fragility of artists-led spaces and collectives that artists work so hard to create.

The analogy worth noting is the fundamental role bees play on the wider functioning, and cross pollination, of the natural world. Artists, too contribute great value to the working and living world beyond the cultural sector, though their 'hives' are threatened by a lack of funding, changes to business rates and operation costs, the cost of living increases, damaging legislation for the use of property and development schemes, and a general lack of appreciation or recognition for the important work they do, and the value they add to society.

**These spaces and collectives play an instrumental role in creating affordable spaces for artists to create, work, experiment and connect with each other – professionalising the operation of their artistic practices. All of these stages of working feed into the broader cultural sector and creative industries, often spilling over into other sectors in the form of research, teaching or by creatively innovating new ways of working and ideas. Making space for creativity to be nurtured and ensuring it is affordable, whether permanent or temporary, supports the democratisation of culture and furthermore community development, social innovation and initiative for the development of civic awareness and responsibility.**

The conference is designed for partakers to engage in a participatory way, sharing their learnings and findings, having worked actively within the sector. They are encouraged to share difficulties, obstacles and solutions for the development of a more sustainable cultural ecosystem. A sustainable cultural ecosystem will need to consider different aspects and effect change that cascades down from policy making and the operation of larger institutions, to smaller arts organisations and individual artists.

Solving issues around the sustainability of these spaces requires an understanding for the need of artists' organisations to be flexible enough to respond to changes in their environments, whilst engaging deeply with inequalities and the instrumentalisation of arts and cultures. An ecosystem can only be sustainable if its collective components are sustainable too. Therefore, the conference invites artists and artist-led spaces to discuss and share best practices around organisational identities, governance, networks, operations, processes of evaluation, accessibility, and equality, diversity and inclusion. The conference aims to offer a platform for both sharing and listening, creating a space that is diverse in stakeholders to broaden the learning to the wider cultural ecosystem and further support artists and their organisations. Educating those who engage with these spaces as much as those who run them.



### Next steps...

When Arts Council England decommissioned the sector support specific fund, East Street Arts applied for an uplift in their National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) funding. This was successfully granted. Meaning, they are now in a position to continue to build on the work of the Guild programme and look at new ways of supporting artist-led spaces.

One aspiration of the Guild programme was to facilitate international research trips, in the hope of gaining insight into alternative business models, structures and programming within spaces across Europe and beyond. Whilst the global pandemic restricted this activity, East Street Arts continues to recognise the importance of this research, and further-afield learning, and aims to coordinate such a programme in the near future.

At the time in which this publication is written, the Guild team have already been consulting the cohort members to ensure they feel equipped and empowered to continue on their quest to create a sustainable artist-led organisation. Though, this journey is subject to the individual needs of each member of the cohort, meaning the duration and operation will be unique to everybody. East Street Arts therefore wishes to maintain relationships with and advocate for these spaces, offering continued support and a platform from which each organisation will be listened to.





HUMAN

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# Glossary

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## Advocacy

Getting support from another person to help you express your views and wishes, and help you stand up for your rights.

## Associate Members

A person who is a member of a club, organisation etc. but has only partial rights and privileges or subordinate status.

## Board

A board of directors is an executive committee that jointly supervises the activities of an organisation, which can be either a for-profit or a non-profit organisation.

## Business Canvas

A strategic management template used for developing new business models and documenting existing ones.

## Capacity

The amount of time available to do work or the non-human resources such as the facilities, assets, equipment etc. required to do the work.

## Capital Developments

Investment in the construction or adjustment of buildings or equipment.

## Case Studies

An in-depth study of one person, group, or event.

## Catalyse

Cause an action or process to begin.

## Charitable Community Benefits Society

A society owned by the members, established for the benefit of the community.

## Cluster Organisation

The legal entity that supports the strengthening of collaboration, networking and learning.

## Community Asset Transfer

A process that allows a community organisation to take over publicly-owned land or buildings in a way that recognises the public benefits that the transfer will bring.

## Community Engagement

The process of seeking to involve a specific community in achieving long-term and sustainable outcomes, processes, relationships, discourse, decision-making, or implementation.

## Community Interest Company

A special type of limited company which exists to benefit the community rather than private shareholders.

## Creative Land Trust

An independent organisation that will secure permanent workspaces for artists.

## Discipline

A branch or knowledge or skill related to a practice, craft or profession

## Diverse Backgrounds

People with different circumstances and/or beliefs including racial and ethnic, socioeconomic, geographic, religious, political, sexual orientation, gender and life experience.

## Feasibility Study

A preliminary exploration of a proposed project or undertaking to determine its merits and viability.

## Governance

A system that provides a framework for managing organisations.

## Heritage Action Zone

An Historic England initiative designed to unleash the power of the historic environment, creating conditions for economic growth and improving the quality of life in villages, towns and cities across England.

## Informative

Providing useful or interesting information.

## Idiosyncratic

An individualising characteristic or quality.

## Lobby

Seek to influence on an issue.

## Locality

A geographical area.

## Meanwhile Space

The way in which a space (like an empty shop unit) or a building (like an empty department store) might be used temporarily while it is empty or awaiting long-term use.

## Nomadic

A loosely coupled, fluid, and transient form of organisation that better corresponds to an external environment.

## Peer

A person who is equal to another in abilities, qualifications, age, background, and social status.

## Protected Characteristics

A right not to be treated less favourably, or subjected to an unfair disadvantage, by reason of that characteristic, for example, because of your age, race, religion, or sex.

## Reflexive

Being able to examine your own feelings, reactions, and motives and how these influence what you do or think in a situation.

## Remunerated

To pay someone for services rendered or work done.

## Resources

A stock or supply of money, materials, staff, and other assets that can be drawn on by a person or organisation in order to function effectively.

## Robust

Ability to withstand or overcome diverse conditions.

## Social Capital

The value derived from positive connections between people.

## Socio-Economic

Related to the differences between groups of people caused mainly by their financial situation.

## Society Status

The honour or prestige attached to one's position in society.

## Success Measures

A measure of success is a standard by which a person or entity assesses whether or not they've achieved their goals.

## Stakeholder

A person, group or organisation with a vested interest, or stake, in the decision-making and activities of a business, organisation or project.

## SWOT

A SWOT analysis helps you assess internal factors that might affect your business (strengths and weaknesses) and external factors (opportunities and threats).

## Town Deal

An agreement in principle between the Government, the Lead Council and the Town Deal Board.





# Cohort Map & Directory



**1. Abingdon Studios**

Est. 2014 Blackpool  
Artist-Led Studio & Gallery



Abingdon Studios, based in the heart of Blackpool Town Centre, is the only dedicated contemporary visual arts studio provider in Blackpool which aims to be a centre for talent development and nurturing visual arts development in the region.

**2. Artworks**

Est. 2009 Halifax  
Artist-Led Studio & Engagement Programme



Artworks from Halifax is an art school, gallery and artist studios committed to providing opportunity and engagement with art for all ages and abilities.

**3. Assembly House**

Est. 2014 Leeds  
Artist-Led Studio & Gallery



Assembly House provide affordable studio spaces, and career support for early career artists. They develop creative projects in and for their local community, run a programme of skills sharing, and commission local artists.

**4. Babeworld**

Est. 2019 London & Stoke-on-Trent  
Collective



Babeworld seeks to create a more representative art world through the creation of art, fundraising, creating grants, and facilitation of events - for those who are marginalised in the arts.

**5. Bon Volks**

Est. 2015 Margate  
Artist-Led Studios



Bon Volks Studios from Margate is an artist studios and project space with a strong focus on collective responsibility and providing a space that positively impacts the local community.

**6. Bricks**

Est. 2019 Bristol  
Artist-Led Studios & Engagement Programme



Bricks' mission is to join the dots in Bristol's grassroots visual arts ecology, supporting artists and collectives through exhibitions, studio provision and professional development opportunities.

**7. Broccoli Arts**

Est. 2019 London  
Artist-Led Theatre Company



Broccoli focus on presenting and nurturing work by/for/about lesbian, bisexual and queer women (LBQW) across stage and page. Broccoli exists to produce work that has variety, ingenuity and relevance.

**8. Caraboo Projects**


Est. 2018 Bristol  
Collective (and former artspace)



Caraboo Projects in Bedminster, Bristol is dedicated to building an accessible art space that promotes experimentation and education across disciplines.

**9. CLAY**

Est. 2012 Leeds  
Artist-Led Performing Arts Venue



CLAY is a centre for artworks that test boundaries and artists whose practice is hard to define. It has a bold ambition to be an art centre for live and interdisciplinary artwork and provide a space for artists to take risks and experiment.

**10. Contemporary Other**

Est. 2019 Birmingham  
Collective



Grassroots organisation sitting at the intersections of art, race and care.

**11. Decoder**


Est. 2012 Penzance  
Artist-Led Studio & Engagement Programme



Decoder is an artist-led queer contemporary art organisation whose curatorial and research projects are focused on Queer art, Dyke tactics, radical practices, Gender, Queer identity and raw art - exploring power at the margins.

**12. Double Elephant**

Est. 1997 Exeter  
Print Studio



Double Elephant Print Workshop from Exeter provides open access print facilities, community workshops and a strong body of arts in health activities to encourage and support people to discover their creativity.

**13. DYAD Creative**

Est. 2014 Norwich  
Collective



Dyad Creative from Norwich is a Franco-British collaboration that focuses on contemporary visual arts and performance.

**14. Fish Factory**

Est. 2011 Cornwall  
Studios & Events Space



Fish Factory from Penryn, Cornwall is a not-for-profit, community art space that brings together people of all ages and from all walks of life in a vibrant artistic community.

**15. Global Arts Manchester**

Est. 2018 Manchester  
Collective



Global Arts Manchester is a group of diverse international women artists who all have a visual arts practice spanning painting, sculpture, drawing, film, photography, and much more.

**16. Grief Series**

Est. 2014 Leeds  
Artist-Led Studio & Gallery



Informed by rigorous research with academics, clinicians and the public, The Grief Series aims to create safe spaces where notions of grief and bereavement can be discussed and expressed openly through a range of empowering creative practice.

**17. Haarlem Artspace**

Est. 2017 Derbyshire  
Studios & Gallery



Haarlem Artspace from Wirksworth, Derbyshire champions rurally based contemporary artists and creative practitioners, providing unique, flexible spaces for cultivating practice.

**18. K6 Gallery**

Est. 2015 Southampton  
Artist-Led Gallery



K6 Gallery from Southampton operates from a pair of red phone boxes. The gallery runs a diverse programme of exhibitions engaging audiences through innovative contemporary art programming in public spaces across the city.

**19. MAFWA Theatre**

Est. 2020 Leeds  
Artist-Led Theatre Company



Mafwa Theatre brings refugees, asylum seekers and settled communities together in Leeds, using drama and the arts to create work that celebrates our similarities and differences.

**20. Navigator North**

Est. 2010 Middlesbrough  
Artist-Led Studios & Engagement Programme



Navigator North initiates activities to raise the profile of artists and creative practice in the North East - inspiring visual artists and creative communities to thrive.

**21. ORT Gallery**

Est. 2012 Birmingham  
Gallery & Engagement Programme



Ort Gallery is an artist-led exhibition space in Balsall Heath, Birmingham with the social mission to facilitate dialogue in the community.

**22. PROFORMA**

Est. 2017 Manchester  
Gallery, Residency Programme



PROFORMA from Greater Manchester is an art organisation that supports emerging and mid-career visual artists through a dynamic exhibition programme in non-traditional gallery spaces.

**23. Rising Sun Artspace**

Est. 1991 Reading  
Venue & Studios



An independent arts centre and the heart of Reading's cultural life for over 27 years. The volunteer-led centre hosts a diverse programme of events, workshops and participatory projects for, and by, the local community.

**24. Shy Bairns**


Est. 2016 Manchester  
Artist-Led Print Collective



Shy Bairns is the collaborative practice of artists, designers and curators working together on a responsive programme of zines, exhibitions and workshops.

**25. Two Queens**

Est. 2012 Leicester  
Studios & Gallery



Two Queens from Leicester is an artist-run gallery and studios situated in Leicester's Cultural Quarter with the ambition of providing a centre for experimental modes of arts production, exhibition and exchange.



# Guild Timeline

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	
2019				Away Day - Directors visited 15 of the 20 Artist-Led spaces									
					Induction								
2020	← Away Day - Directors visited 15 of the 20 Artist-Led spaces			COVID Support Package									
	Unlimited Conference									Guild Conversations Series 1			
									Guild Digital Commissions				
2021	← COVID Support Package										AN Assembly Abingdon		
	← Guild Conversations Series 1			Guild Hall Support Programme		Guild Hall Uncultured Presentation		← Guild Conversations Series 2					
	← Guild Digital Commissions								Open Doors Launch	AN Assembly Navigator North	AN Assembly Haarlem Artspace		
				Go See Fund									
				Virtual Studio Swaps									
2022	Shifting Sands Launch	Guild Hall x 2 on NPO support		Seed Fund (Pre) Feasibility Studies									
	← Go See Fund			Daisy James Residency		Guild Residency Two Destination Language			← Guild Conversations Series 3, In Practice Podcast				
	← Virtual Studio Swaps									Guild Hall Seed Fund	AN Assembly Dyad / Two Queens		
	← Seed Fund (Pre) Feasibility Studies												
2023	← Guild Conversations Series 3, In Practice Podcast												
				Alumni Day Short Supply									
					Hive Conference								