


milk



The Creativity Issue

The background of the entire page is a dense, repeating pattern of teal-colored line art. It features various types of leaves, including some with prominent veins and others that are more simple in shape, along with thin, curved branches. The pattern is scattered across the white background, creating a natural, organic feel.

'Don't be satisfied with stories,
how things have gone with others.
Unfold your own myth'
—Jalaluddin Rumi





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From the Editor

Our aim for this print issue was to be ambitious. We wanted a theme that was relevant and that encouraged our readers to think. To think in a time when cuts to arts funding threaten some of the most important organisations and festivals in Bath and Bristol. In a time when the process for leaving the European Union has been triggered. In an era when technology is dominating our daily lives.

This issue is a journal which asks the big questions about creativity and celebrates the work that takes place in the South West. Voices and ideas are important to us. From a theoretical point of view to a community perspective. We are curious about the people involved in the creative

industries and the leaders of initiatives such as the Bath Bridge, a collaboration which raises ambition. We want to encourage people to go out and get involved in festivals and exhibitions in the local area.

We couldn't have produced this issue without the support of our Publishing team. Without our contributors and their ideas, we simply wouldn't have a magazine. It's been a pleasure to work with Sophie Parsons, who has created beautiful illustrations for this issue. Thank you all for making an idea transform into a reality.

Ruth Anderson
Editor

Why it's Time to Switch Off



Author: Molly Robjohn
Illustrator: Sophie Parsons

For most millennials, when boredom strikes our first instinct is to check Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or fall into the trap that is YouTube and watch endless episodes of *The Ellen Show*. The internet is great – no doubt about it – we are able to communicate with the world, share material, search for anything our heart desires. However, many of us have noticed how the internet, and especially social media, erode creativity. Our generation is often referred to as the ‘Google Generation’. We spend hours glued to the web, watching and read-

ing the same mindless content – *Buzzfeed* quizzes, LAD Bible posts and memes – regardless of how entertaining these may be. We constantly re-tweet, share and like other people’s concepts, but when do we ever create our own content? Are we losing our individuality because of the web?

The inventor of the wind-up radio, Trevor Baylis, believes the Google Generation is lacking in hands-on skills and creativity because it spends so much time online. It is possible to say that the internet has stalled our imaginative process.

Many teens and young adults use Tumblr or Pinterest; these are platforms that allow you to present your personality or thoughts through images and text, but when have those images or text actually been created by the user? Copycat behaviour is evident on social media, with many of us jumping onto the next trend bandwagon – remember the *Harlem Shake*, planking and the Kylie Jenner lip challenge? Do they make us unique? Are they creative? I'm not convinced.

These days it is common for my generation to dream about an easy-access online career, whether that be as a YouTuber or a social media influencer, but it is unlikely these careers were a result of creativity; more likely the person jumped onto a popular trend and stayed with it. YouTube Gamer Markiplier released a video in 2016 stating how 'YouTube has changed'. He discussed the platform's lack of ingenuity, and how it has evolved into a 'self-fulfilling cycle of pessimism', explaining that users only make content they know will gain more views or find more subscribers rather than expressing themselves creatively.

Vlogger Casey Neistat has also spoken about his dismay at behaviour on YouTube after he and many viewers noticed other YouTube channels copying his unique video and editing style. This asks the question: is anyone unique on YouTube? It seems imitating is the norm, creativity is not.

According to *The Telegraph*, young people aged sixteen to twenty-four spend as much as twenty-seven hours a week online and adults spend approximately twenty hours a week. This is due to the increase in digital technologies such as tablets and mobile phones, enabling us to access the web

anywhere, any time. Most of us probably don't realise how much of our time we use – and more likely waste – online.

We are all guilty of spending too much time on the internet, but we can all put in a conscious effort to put down our phones and delve into real life. 'Digital detoxes' have become increasingly popular in recent years.

According to *The Guardian*, over fifteen million UK users have taken breaks from the digital world. It's Time To Log Off is a company that encourages internet users to go offline and reconnect to their surroundings. It offers retreats to Devon, Italy and Hawaii that enable you to reconnect to the 'outside world', reduce stress and build better relationships

with your peers. Emily Luxton, a writer for the *Huffington Post*, took part in one of the retreats and shared her experience with her readers, stating: 'Over the course of a week, I found myself connecting much more deeply with the people around me. It was so refreshing to have real, in-depth con-

versations with a group of people, without anyone's attention darting away to a screen. Without distractions, our conversations were much richer and more interesting.'

Many people believe that creativity stems from our own ability to find solitude. Therefore digital detoxes could really help us find inspiration. However, it can be difficult to switch off straight away and there is no shame in taking small steps in escaping the digital world. You could go for a walk, read a book, talk to people, draw something, go exploring or, when you're out with friends, just turn off your phone.

Be inspired and create something that matters more than likes, views or re-tweets.

It was so refreshing
to have real, in-depth
conversations

Mark Ecob

Book Designer
Business Founder
Art Director

Interviewer: Jonathon Stephenson
Illustrator: Sophie Parsons

He's created covers for Iain Banks and Alexander McCall Smith, won a prestigious industry award, and lectures at Bath Spa University. We ask what it's really like to be a designer – how do you get that first break and how do you stay inspired?



After graduating with a degree in Graphic Design, Mark Ecob faced career uncertainty. Not really knowing what he wanted to do next and with eight months of placements lined up at various agencies, he started applying for jobs. There were openings available in industries like gaming and typography, but in the end he found himself at a publishing company.

Mark first developed his innovative skills working as a Junior Designer for Hodder & Stoughton – now owned by Hachette – which is one of the largest publishing groups in the UK. Hodder & Stoughton publishes fiction and non-fiction titles. The experience and the portfolio of work that he acquired meant he was prepared for his next role at Hachette's neighbour, Orion Publishing Group. Mark decided to accept the position of Senior Designer for the Phoenix Paperbacks imprint, which involved designing a variety of book covers for different clients. Mark says of the process: 'Some books I haven't been able to design, and there are some that have flown through first time. The joy of it is in not knowing where the challenge will lie.'

His next move was to Edinburgh, to take up the position of Art Director at Canongate Books. He later relocated to London, when asked to form a new Art Department there. In 2009, Canongate was named Publisher of the Year. In 2010, Mark decided to set up his own studio, Mecob, based in Frome, Somerset. He designs creative book covers for a variety of publishing companies. Mecob's international list of clients includes Penguin, Amazon, Bloomsbury, HarperCollins and Walker Books, working with authors such as Iain Banks and

Alexander McCall Smith. In an interview for Reedsy, which connects publishers and creatives, Mark talked about the challenges of freelancing: 'The downside of working for myself is that I find it hard to switch off, the hours I kept in those first couple of years were crazy. Now it's really paid off though, I have great relationships with a wide range of clients internationally from the big houses to innovative self-publishing platforms and individuals.'

It was through his freelance work that Mark gained his connections with publishers, who began to approach him for projects. Mark produces logos, sales catalogues and marketing material. He is constantly thinking about the client and

the reader of the book. As well as running Mecob, Mark lectures at academic and industry events, and provides consultancy about cover designs for clients, including the crowd-funding publisher Unbound.

Mark outlines his approach to the creative process:

1. Read the book. Sketch out cover ideas while marrying them up with the other parts of a brief; for example, market, production values, competition.
2. Cover work can be individual pieces of art, or commercial packages that follow a trend. I enjoy the extremes and where they might meet.
3. In an ideal world, after immersing yourself in it, you give the book a face that comes from within its pages. It's like giving an actor the perfect costume, so they feel the part and perform perfectly.



Be nice.
Be patient.
Be creative.
Be proud of your work.

The Interview

How do you stay inspired?

I just keep my eyes open. Being a designer means being a bit of a sponge, reading and watching everything you can get your hands on in order to create a wide frame of reference for a project. I find Twitter a brilliant place to find great covers as they happen; there is a really genuine community of book designers out there that I'm delighted to be a part of.

Can you think of any good examples of projects that pushed your creative boundaries?

Each one teaches me something new, and each is a mini test of your creative and management skills.

What have been some of the most important innovations in book cover design?

As well as advances in technology, and the lead Penguin took in mass-market paperback

publishing, cover design has grown beautifully into an art form. It has weathered the digital storm some prophesied would harm it. Personally, I think digital publishing has consolidated cover design into a craft. Readers want more beautiful books to own. They have become fashion items as well as a form of entertainment – lining up your books and showing them off is definitely a thing.

Tell us about working with clients.

It demands much more time and consideration cross-platform, but they can be really enjoyable. I've worked on big brands and emerging brands. I think the key is get to know the project back to front before creating anything and always keep lines of communication open with the client.

mecob.co.uk

Hats Off to a Creative Theory

In the 1960s, Edward de Bono suggested multiple perspectives would help solve problems. How are businesses using his theory today?

Author: Shannen Twomey

Illustrator: Sophie Parsons

Is a lack of motivation and creativity getting you down? Do you ever wonder how brands such as Apple, Hewlett-Packard and Honda continue to produce groundbreaking technology? Keep reading and you'll find out.

Positivity can be hard to come by in a working environment if there is poor morale among colleagues and issues with communication within the team. With time becoming more and more precious, effective decision-making in the workplace is crucial. Much stress and time-wasting could be saved by mentally popping on your thinking cap – one of six to be exact – each representing a different perspective. This theory of thinking promotes both lateral and parallel thinking in teams. The Oxford English Dictionary defines lateral thinking as finding solutions to 'intractable problems using unconventional methods', while parallel thinking involves considering various ideas alongside each other.

These two terms were first coined by Edward de Bono, a creativity theorist, in his book *The Six Thinking Hats* (1965). Born in Malta in 1933, de Bono has won numerous awards for his contribution to creative thinking. Entrepreneur, Richard Branson, praised him as 'an inspiring man with brilliant ideas, de Bono never ceases to amaze me with his clarity

of thought.' De Bono's approach follows the idea of having six different coloured hats, which represent six different attitudes towards problem-solving. Each hat encourages a member of the team to adopt a certain attitude with the aim of formulating a solution to the problem that has been posed. No hierarchies, no egos, just six coloured hats.

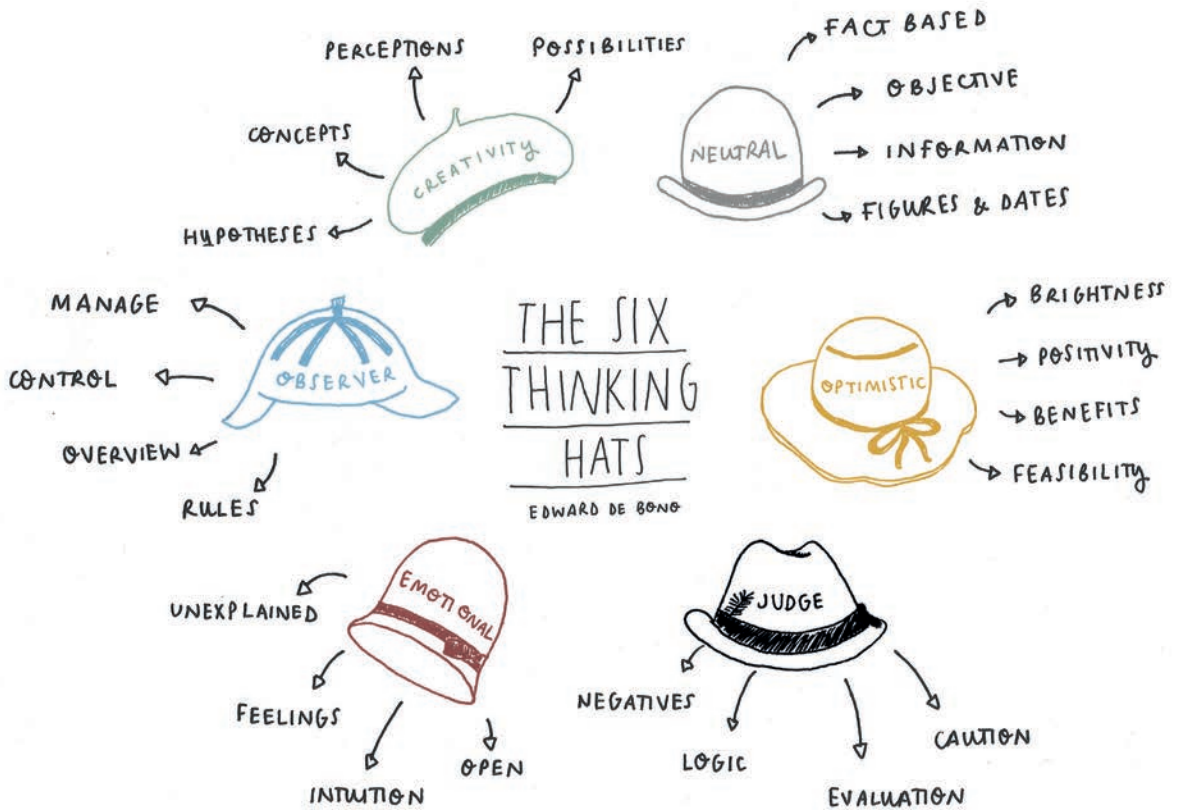
This method has proved effective because it brings awareness to the various perspectives at hand and takes into consideration both practical and emotional opinions, leading to a fully balanced team and giving every member an equal position.

Nearly forty years after de Bono first set out his theory, business

Hewlett-Packard is still using the tool today. Introduced in 2004, various teams throughout the company were asked to produce business plans in conjunction with the company's corporate goals. Both the 'process' team and the quality management team banged heads when it came to drafting a plan, thus the Six Hats Theory was adopted and proved successful as it sped up initiatives and the group dynamics began to alter.

Ultimately this is an efficient way to improve communication within a team in businesses. De Bono also offers online courses in both educational and corporate training.

'Intelligence is something
we are born with.
Thinking is a skill that must
be learned'
—Edward de Bono



What do the hats mean?

The **white hat** gets equal participants to consider the facts and only the facts. Just the black and white information, no frilly bits.

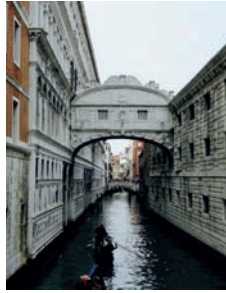
The **yellow hat** represents optimism and positivity. If a member is wearing this hat, then they must focus in on the values and the strengths of an idea.

The **black hat** symbolises judgement. The complete opposite of yellow, this person must ask the questions of why something will not work.

The **red hat** focuses solely on emotions and intuition. Members share fears, likes and dislikes and don't apologise or provide an explanation.

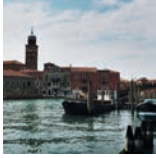
The **blue hat** signifies the process, and is the ultimate goody-two-shoes. This hat must abide by the rules and ultimately oversees the whole thinking process.

The **green hat** emphasises creativity and innovation. This is an exciting chance to cover new ground and explore new and different avenues.



Emma Holland

Showcase



'I love seeing photographs I've taken juxtaposed. Travel is a massive inspiration for my creative process'



Alongside studying Graphic Communication at Bath Spa University, Emma enjoys discovering architecture. She shot this series while travelling in Canada and Venice.

Insight: Andrea Kurland



The editor of counterculture magazine *Huck* shares her thoughts on how to nurture creativity at work and in print

Interviewer: Ruth Anderson

Illustrator: Suzanne Rodzik

The way we talk about creativity at *Huck* is creativity in its purest form. It can be quite transgressive and if it's coming from a place where it doesn't have to prescribe you any set rules, it's really exciting because it can actually be a force for change. You're talking about artists and activists. Artists who blend art with activism, filmmakers who have a social conscience but yet they can be creative – and creativity can really help their message reach a wider audience.

The kind of creativity I'm excited about creates some kind of disruption or change in society. That's not to say that you can't have creativity for creativity's sake, which you can. But it's not the stuff that grabs my attention as much. I think that people can be a disruptive force if they are channelling their creativity in an interesting way.

At *Huck* we naturally try and foster creativity. Sometimes when I've been in other work environments they try and orchestrate it. We're

lucky and very privileged to work with people who are naturally passionate about what they do, so they have inbuilt creative thinking. That has to come from within. You can't just create that on the outside in a working environment. Anything that works in our office and feels like it fosters creativity comes from people just naturally being who they are. I don't think it can be imposed.

Creativity can also be about process. So we come into work, we sit at a computer. It's not just a wild environment where we're like 'ideas, ideas, ideas'. It's work. Most mornings on my way to work I think: I literally have no ideas ... I have no thoughts. You have to accept that and then proactively look for things that trigger ideas. You can't be in a creative frame of mind all the time. For me, it's about research. Go and make the thing happen. It's not just going to come to you. Read a lot, speak to people and use the internet as a whirlpool of information.

Where Has the Art Fund Gone ?

What impact will
the cuts have on the
cultural life and
creative industries of
Bath and Bristol?

Author: Courtney Lawrence

In a time of great uncertainty Emma Stone's winning speech at the BAFTAs for her role in *La La Land* exemplified just how important creativity is to so many lives. It helps us express ourselves, voice our opinions, contemplate our feelings and manage stress. For many, creativity is their livelihood; something they eat, breathe and sleep. Artists, innovators and other creatives make our country unique.

However, on Valentine's Day 2017, Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) Council voted to cut 100% of arts grants to the city, aiming to save £433,000 by 2020. Cuts will impact The Bath Festival, which provides performance opportunities and work experience for students. Cuts to the arts in Bath are just one of several slashes in funding and services that B&NES is targeting. The Council has to remove £37 million from its budget over the next three years.

Arts cuts will also affect venues used by

students. For example, Bath's 44AD artspace is under threat. Dr Jo Dahn, a Bath Spa University Senior Research Fellow and ceramicist, says: 'The gallery is important in many ways. For example, it offers MA Curatorial Practice students opportunities to curate exhibitions in the real world.' Director of Lane House Arts, Jenny Pollitt, adds: '44AD offers a dynamic programme of courses, exhibitions, events and workshops benefiting countless charities, schools and visitors.'

Crucial to universities such as Bath Spa, the cultural sector provides a multitude of career paths for new graduates hoping to find their dream jobs. Ryan Mellish, a third-year Acting student, says: 'The cuts are an added pain for those who want to perform, because already the job market for us after graduation is horribly tough. I'm having to consider going back home to Wales because Bath and Bristol do not have the funding to support what I want to do.'

Bristol is home to Banksy's street artwork and the internationally recognised Aardman Studios, but on 21 February 2017, Bristol City Council voted to cut 40% of arts funding, with £190,000 to be removed in 2018–19 and the same in 2021. Although these cuts are significantly less than those in Bath, they will still have an impact on the creative scene in Bristol.

Despite the noticeable difference in size and atmosphere, Bath and Bristol are very similar in how much they value their creativity and cultural history. Considering the nature of the two cities, to many residents the cuts to arts funding feel like a bizarre decision. Actor Timothy West echoed this view: 'The cities of Bath and Bristol have been

proudly associated with producing world-class theatre for well over two centuries. These proposed savage cuts to their arts funding are an unforgivable assault on the social and cultural life for which both cities are justly valued.'

A thriving cultural sector is also important in inspiring the creative industries, from publishing and TV to music and games. The creative industries provide around three million people with employment and are worth £84.1 billion to the UK economy each year, according to the 2016 *Creative Industries Economic Estimates* report. It is a sector that is expanding rapidly – almost three times the rate of our wider economy. Prime Minister Theresa May

has outlined an industrial strategy covering the creative industries, shocking many because they are not usually mentioned. The strategy named five industries that could receive special help from the government. Despite the plan not unanimously receiving praise, the Creative Industries Federation responded

enthusiastically: 'The industrial strategy should build on this considerable record of success as well as insulate the sector from some of the immediate challenges of Brexit.' Sadly, it is inevitable that the creative and cultural sectors will suffer when EU funding is pulled, especially small creative businesses and projects.

Time will tell how the creative industries fare when we exit the EU. The future of our cultural scene is looking uncertain; we can only hope that these well-loved festivals and projects are saved by positive community activism and additional funding. For a start, you can sign the petition on 44AD's website and use #love44AD.

**'In a time that's so divisive,
I think it's really special that
we were all able to come
together to celebrate the
positive gift of creativity'
—Emma Stone**

Bath Bridge

Author: Shannen Twomey

Illustrator: Sophie Parsons

How can we build on our city's heritage and carve out a dynamic identity for the future? We ask an organisation that is leading the way





Home to approximately 84,000 residents, Bath is known for its innovation and creative enterprise. With its UNESCO-recognised Georgian architecture, unique cultural heritage and world-renowned universities, it's unsurprising that so many people choose to live, work and study here. Bath Bridge aims to inspire and curate a vision of what the city's future could look like.

Bath Bridge is an independent, city-wide advisory group including business and cultural leaders from bankers to festival experts. It focuses on raising ambition and collaboration in the city, developing projects and bringing in specialists from national and local networks. Katharine Reeve, Co-founder of Bath Bridge and Subject Leader for Publishing at Bath Spa University, says: 'Creativity is a key feature of our city identity and has been since the eighteenth century. Bath is a national creative-tech hotspot with many companies and high-value jobs, making this an economically vibrant small city. The wide range of cultural activities and festivals have a very positive impact on resident and visitor experience.'

One project, the **Bath Future Talent programme**, works with businesses to provide support and coaching for those in the early stages of their careers. Now in its second year, six young people aged between twenty-five and thirty-two have the chance to engage in exciting new opportunities alongside a given business leader who acts as a mentor. This enables them to develop leadership and project management skills. The project is overseen by Bath Rugby's Non-Executive Director, Lee Sears, who hopes that his involvement with Bridge will help wake up and join up the city.

The Mulberry Park Arts and Culture project works alongside Curo, the not-for-profit housing organisation, to develop arts, culture and leisure activities in Mulberry Park, a housing development near Foxhill. Mulberry Park will provide state-of-

the-art leisure facilities, a new primary school and nursery alongside energy-efficient eco homes. Curo and Bath Bridge are working together to encourage residents to participate in sports and other arts and leisure activities to increase individual wellbeing and community integration. This will be achieved through an open space strategy, which consists of a network of well-designed and cared for open spaces. Belinda Kidd, former CEO of Bath Festivals, is liaising with artists, local community and potential funders to bring diversity and re-development to this new generation of housing development.

The Live/Work/Play website centres on the theme of storytelling, encouraging visitors and residents alike to exchange positive experiences and encounters that have occurred in Bath. The endeavour is led by Holly Tarquini, Executive Director of Bath Film Festival. She believes that these stories will inspire people to discover the real Bath. This will carve an identity that no other city can offer. Bath Bridge not only supports and enhances independent projects, but also works alongside Bath & North East Somerset (B&NES) Council to promote the importance of art and culture heritage in The Economic Development Programme.

As a result of their collaboration with B&NES Council, the organisation was asked to take action on the **Cultural and Creative Strategy** for Bath. This was led by Katharine Reeve, who has spent the last twenty years working in the creative industries. She talks about the initial challenges: 'Bath received far less Arts Council funding than other similar areas because it did not have an appropriate strategy in place. There was not a culture of collaboration and it was clear that this was holding the city back in terms of ambition and developing a coherent brand message.' By focusing on audience participation, local infrastructure and connectivity, the strategy aims to redefine Bath as a 'beautifully inventive and entrepreneurial twenty-first century



THE HOLBURN MUSEUM



MARLBOROUGH BUILDINGS

place with a strong social purpose and a spirit of wellbeing'. The strategy, endorsed by Arts Council England, has been widely referenced and there has been an increase in successful funding applications.

Bath Bridge is also a part of the local **Public Service Board (PSB)**, which brings together the Heads of the NHS Trust, Council and emergency services with representatives from the voluntary sector and both universities. By improving communication between these organisations, the PSB aims to build Bath's economy by increasing integration and access to transport, and developing local networks and opportunities for local residents. It also aims to maximise opportunities for development associated with the river and the Kennet and Avon Canal. Bridge member of the PSB Board, Steve Fuller, is also the Creative Head of brand agency The House. He believes that Bath has a number of

organisations which reinforce positive impact and social gain.

All these projects aspire to shape Bath into a place of outstanding artistry, design and skill. 'There is still much work to do,' says Katharine, 'especially in the light of Council funding cuts – I still believe that collaboration is the key to success.' Bath Bridge encourages local residents to get involved and pitch their own ideas. 'The challenge now is to bring people across the city together in mutually beneficial, exciting collaborations so that we can all make this a truly world-class place to live and work,' says Katharine. Project pitches are judged based on originality and how they will contribute to Bridge's vision. Think about it – what could you do to help make a change?

bathbridge.co.uk

Behind the Fringe

Who are the people who run the Bath Fringe Festival and Fringe Arts Bath and what's it all about?

Author: Emily Pritchard
Photography: Emily Cropton

Bath's Fringe is an annual creative arts festival which aims to enhance and unite the community of the historic city. The festival shares its passion for the arts with Fringe Arts Bath (FAB), an organisation dedicated to raising the profile of contemporary visual arts. The Fringe Arts Festival is Bath's only visual arts festival and actively encourages and celebrates contemporary art within the area. By showcasing the talents of renowned artists and performers, alongside up-and-coming creators, it inspires visitors with a range of artistic disciplines. FAB is a non-profit-making, artist-led organisation, and is run purely by volunteers who have the same passion for creative arts as those who take part.

Eight years into its successful collaboration with Bath Fringe Festival, FAB became its own organisation. Running workshops, events and exhibitions, the team work hard to put on the two-week festival in the early summer.

FAB provides exciting opportunities for artists who are beginning their journey, as well as showcasing talented artists who want to take their work out beyond gallery walls. The organisation aims to present art in an engaging way by placing

artworks in unusual and unexpected places so that visitors can enjoy and interact with them.

Vicky Vatcher is the exhibition curator for FAB. After spending time in the vibrant artistic community of Bristol, she wanted to support the arts in Bath and help steer the city away from its retail stereotype of 'shoes and chocolate'. Vicky has now spent three years with FAB, organising and producing exhibitions. As well as gaining new skills and meeting new people, Vicky thrives on being able to support FAB's aims through producing her own exhibitions, such as last year's street show *White and Black*.

Creativity is often assumed to refer to the creation of acclaimed works of art or composition of a beautiful piece of music. However, the broad concept of creativity can also be considered as not just artistic self-expression, but self-development. When asked about the idea of creativity, Vicky describes it as 'doing something for other people and making it work' and having the feeling that 'you're doing something that makes you grow'.

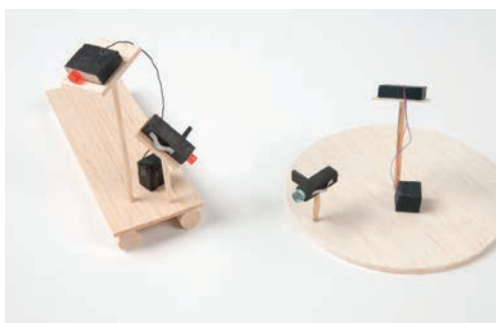
For this year's Fringe Arts Festival, Vicky is hoping to grab the attention of the public by producing an improvisational, semi-scripted

dramatic performance. She uses ideas that naturally come to mind, stemming from her interests in the visual arts and her involvement in teaching performing arts.

Melanie Ezra, curator of the *FAB Intervention* street performance, writes on her blog melanieezra.com, 'Fringe Arts Bath tears up any establishment rules about exhibitions and white cube spaces and encourages us all to think outside the box, smash up the box, and rework it in whatever way we see fit as creatives. The key to the festival is engagement with the public.'

If you are interested in supporting the growing diversity of Bath's contemporary arts community, then visit a few of FAB's events at the 2017 festival, between 26 May and 11 June, for a 'rich, extraordinary, surprising, inspirational' experience. The events themselves will be advertised on the Bath Fringe website and held at venues such as Burdall's Yard, Funky Monkey Studio, Green Park Station, Komedia and the Little Theatre Cinema.

So, whether it is curating a captivating performance, producing a well-written piece of academic work, or even crafting yourself as an individual, the concept of creativity is diverse. Melanie sums up the atmosphere: 'Fringe Arts Bath forms an invaluable dialogue with anyone and everyone. Showing and performing at the festival is not just a stepping stone to getting yourself seen on the international stage, it is the international stage!'



Emily Cropton works in Bristol and has previously exhibited for the Fringe Festival / emilycropton.com.

Space for Art

Authors and Photography:
Suzanne Rodzik and Ruth Anderson

Discover art in galleries, museum exhibitions and
unexpectedly on the walls of buildings



*'Drowned Orchard: Secret Boatyard' (2014) by Lubaina Himid
Navigation Charts exhibition at Spike Island*



Meandering around galleries is one way of stimulating thoughts and ideas. Bristol has an extensive range of free galleries with new exhibitions popping up all the time. 'Art' is not confined to a fixed studio space. Rather than staring at your phone screen, look up and out when walking through urban spaces. Let each piece of work catch your eye: find colours, textures and notice a new pattern. This guide is a starting point to experiencing the creative scene in Bristol.

'See No Evil' @ Nelson Street

Free street art

An abundance of internationally recognised art galleries aren't the only creative spectacles Bristol has to offer. The city has also become a place for some of the most beautiful and fascinating street art in the world. Home to famous graffiti artist Banksy, Bristol is a playground for artists with similar intentions and Nelson Street is just one of their canvases. 'See No Evil' was conceived as part of the London 2012 Festival, which celebrated Britain's diversity and talent. Street artists from all corners of Bristol were given the opportunity to graffiti on any of the street's buildings and this continues today.

Walking down Nelson Street, there is something awe-inspiring about the anonymity of each work. Some pieces are slightly hidden, so make sure to travel down the smaller roads or alleyways. Also be aware that Nelson Street isn't the only road showcasing this sort of work; you can find Banksy's 'Girl with the Pierced Eardrum' just around the corner from Spike Island. Or try Stokes Croft, which seems plastered with paint.

Spike Island

Open Tuesday to Sunday, 12–5pm

Free entry

A short walk from Bristol's Harbourside, Spike Island's small contemporary art hub is vivid and ever-changing. A recent exhibition included *Navigation Charts*, a collection of work by artist Lubaina Himid, one of the leaders of the Black Art movement. The central piece features one hundred wooden cut-outs of Africans taken against their will, enslaved, stripped of their hobbies, jobs and right to creativity. Himid's work questions the merging of cultures, roots and belonging.

spikeisland.org.uk

Bristol Museum & Art Gallery

Open Tuesday to Sunday, 10am–5pm

Free entry

On Queens Road stands your traditional civic gallery, with many collections across three floors, including paintings from the Enlightenment period, glass and ceramics. If you only have a short time, check out *Space is a Place: From Painting to Performance*. The room brings together artists such as Barbara Hepworth, Frank Auerbach and Damien Hirst. It also focuses on the work of London's Camden Town Group and the concept of abstraction. Be sure to experience the sculptural performance video work of John Wood and Paul Harrison.

bristolmuseums.org.uk

Mosaic images clockwise from top left: Picasso graffiti, Lower Castle Street, Bristol / 'The Mountains of Thermopylae' by Edward Lear (1852) / Bristol Museum & Art Gallery on Queens Road / 'Women's Tears Fill the Ocean (Zanzibar)' (1999) / Navigation Charts exhibition at Spike Island / 'No Laughing' garage at Spike Island.

Creativity Against the Machine

‘Imagination is imitative – the
real innovation lies in criticism’
—Oscar Wilde

Author: Katie Marsden
Illustrator: Sophie Parsons

Computers are cleverer, faster and more powerful than ever. From driving cars and defeating chess grand masters to making scientific breakthroughs, developers are teaching computers to do more and more. And yet it seems this is not enough. Programmers are now trying to recreate the human brain in a digital format. But will it ever be possible to develop a computer capable of being independently creative?

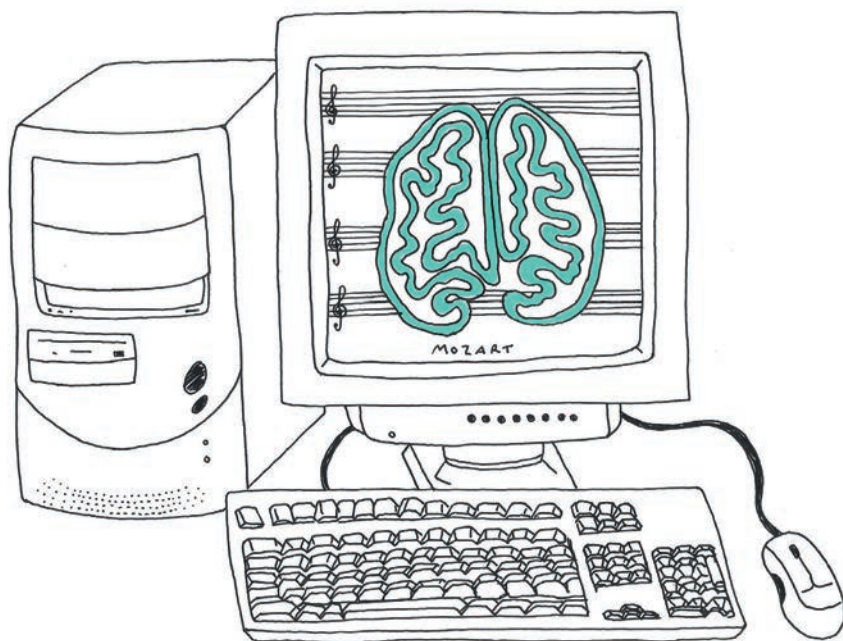
Entrepreneur, Ed Rex, points to Jonathan Gottschall’s Model of Creativity to support his belief that computers are already thinking creatively. The model speculates that creativity occurs through a process of immersion, assimilation and recombination. New ideas are generated when a person researches a subject, contextualises it and then reassembles the information to create a new outcome – all tasks that computers already do.

From poetry to fine art, music composition

to writing recipes, computers have been independently producing original content for years. In 1984, the computer RACTOR released a book of poetry entitled *The Policeman’s Beard is Half Constructed*. In 2011, programmer Zackary Scholl fooled editors of American literary journal *Archive* with his computer-written poem *For the Bristlecone Snag* – only revealing the poem’s true author four years later in a blog post.

In the art world, painter Harold Cohen was internationally renowned for the paintings produced by AARON – a computer he started teaching to draw in 1972. During an interview in 1982, Cohen joked that he would be the first artist who could go on producing new work even after his eventual death. AARON, after all, could continue to create work without Cohen’s influence.

Composer David Cope has spent over thirty years creating Emmy, a computer program able




to compose music so successfully that its work has been confused with pieces by Mozart. Cope describes Mozart's composition technique in terms similar to those a computer programmer might use: 'He was able to digest it and store it in his database. He could recombine it with other things so that the output would be hardly recognisable.'

What about food? A refined palate would seem essential for anyone looking to publish a recipe book, but IBM's Watson computer proved otherwise. Having analysed thousands of recipes, the computer published *Cognitive Cookery with Chef Watson*, showcasing new recipes it had developed. IBM argues that because it is not biased towards specific flavours, Watson can invent more innovative recipes than a human chef.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines creativity as 'the use of imagination or original ideas to create something'. At first glance all these examples

appear to meet this criterion. However, describing these computers and their work as being creative is problematic. There is a debate about who can be identified as the creator of the resulting work – the programmer or the computer? Another problem is that these computers are still only generating these new works at random, following the parameters they have been given. A human being is still required to look at the results and establish whether they are any good. Oscar Wilde argued that 'imagination is imitative – the real innovation lies in criticism'. While everyone has ideas, we sift through them to find success. While computers can already develop new ideas, it will be harder to teach computers to judge the value of their work.

Ultimately, until these problems have been explored and debated further, it will be difficult to definitively say whether computers are actually able to think creatively.



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