

SQUARELY

magazine

By The Square Club



July - September 2025 | Issue Ten

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SQUARE

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Issue 10 | July - September 2025

EDITOR LETTER

Dear readers,

It's a pleasure to welcome you to our summer issue of Squarely! This edition is all about fuelling your creativity through art, music, travel and community. Summer often brings a full calendar, with trips, festivals, and sun-soaked days out. With all the connections, culture and fresh ideas this season offers, it's the perfect time to top up your creative cup.

There's a new name making waves on the Bristol art scene, and we're thrilled to have her as this quarter's cover artist: introducing you to Darcy Whent. On page 26, Whent shares the stories and sources behind her work. If you're looking to revive your own artistic spark, we've got our guide to healing your inner artist on page 20 to help get you creating again, no matter your medium.

Bristol's creative community continues to inspire us, and this issue's **Local Hero**, Dennis Syncham, is no exception, working tirelessly to change the lives of young people in the city through sport, community and culture.

In our **Members' Circle**, we're proud to spotlight Euella Jackson, an award-winning presenter, filmmaker and creative producer who is also co-director of the Rising Arts Agency. Jackson's passion for platforming underrepresented voices is changing the cultural landscape of our city.

We're also shining a light on the importance of Bristol's independent businesses. In **Eyes on the Highstreet**, Features Editor, Pascale Loftus explores why our city needs our support now more than ever.

Summer is a time for new adventures. Whether you're staying local or heading further afield, we've got your travel fix. On page 42, dive into our latest **Jet Set** feature where we introduce MESH Club in Johannesburg, one of our brilliant reciprocal partners, and share insider tips for making the most of your trip to this vibrant city.

There's so much more packed into these pages, all designed to leave you feeling energised, connected, and creatively recharged.

Until next time,

Sophie

For all queries, comments or interest in being featured, drop us a line at editorial@squarely.com



Sophie Yardley • Editor-in-Chief



What's On
New events are continuously being added to our events programme, scan the QR code to keep up to date.

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WELCOME TO THE SQUARE CLUB

Welcome to *The Square Club*, Bristol's Private Members' Club for the creative industries.

Established in 1990 and housed within a beautiful Georgian townhouse on Berkeley Square in Clifton, The Square was founded to create a unique and dynamic environment for like-minded creative professionals to meet, collaborate and propel their ideas forward. Today, The Square Club thrives on the same ethos. Wealth and status carry no merit here. Instead, membership consists of people with one key thing in common – a *creative soul*.

The Square is home to a thriving community of creatives, and provides members with an all-encompassing services offer. Along with a vibrant events programme, playing host to over thirty events a month, and an *award-winning restaurant*, The Square provides a dynamic social environment and a flexible workspace. Equipped with a boutique lounge, the Lower Deck cocktail bar & hidden city-centre terrace, the club is ideal for working, socialising, holding events and connecting with new people. For those wanting to stay the night, members can access preferential rates on rooms and suites in the adjacent *Berkeley Square Hotel*.

Next door, you'll find *Square Works*, our high-end serviced workspace. With everything from office spaces to flexible hot-desking packages, ergonomic furniture to a state of the art fitness suite, members are left wanting for nothing.

Our network of creatives opens up endless opportunities for collaboration, inspiration, and meaningful connection. You're invited to discover more, and experience the essence of Bristol's cultural spirit within the welcoming embrace of The Square Club. Discover a place where creativity thrives, connections are forged, and inspiration knows no bounds. Come and be a part of something truly special.

Find out more and apply for membership at www.thesquareclub.com/private-members-club/

A DAY IN THE LIFE

By Charlie Loddo

While I might be a little biased, there's something unmistakably special about The Square Club's terrace and Secret Garden. Tucked away from the hustle and bustle of the city, this open-air oasis brings a sense of calm and creativity to every moment. Whether you're starting the day with a freshly made coffee or winding it down with a signature cocktail, the terrace and Secret Garden is the perfect sanctuary.

Spend the day with us, as we share a day with you at The Square Club, alfresco style.

Early mornings on the terrace are a perfect way to start your day off. The city buzzes softly just beyond the walls, whilst our terrace remains serene; ideal for catching up on emails, enjoying breakfast, or simply planning your day ahead. With greenery all around and the first light filtering in, it's an ideal setting to gather your thoughts for the day.



By lunchtime, the terrace comes alive with conversation, clinking glasses, and the sounds of cutlery on plates. The seasonal lunch menu is designed with alfresco dining in mind, with fresh, colourful dishes that are bursting with the flavours of summer. Whether you're dining with colleagues or catching up with a friend, it's a brilliant way to break up the day and savour the sunshine.



The early afternoon brings a quiet lull to the terrace, providing a hidden window of calm. As the lunchtime crowds drift back to their day, the space settles into a more reflective rhythm. It's the perfect moment to take a breather with a coffee, skim through a book (or the latest issue of *Squarely*), or simply sit and enjoy the late afternoon sun.



As evening approaches, the terrace shifts again. Lights soften overhead, music drifts out gently, and the cocktails begin to flow



with our members' happy hour. Whether it's taking advantage of our expert mixologists, enjoying an early dinner with a friend, or a spontaneous get-together, the space transforms into a relaxed, sociable hub. With curated drinks and dishes served into the evening, it's the perfect end to the day.

What makes the terrace so special is its versatility. It's not just a place to dine, it's a space to breathe, to connect, to work, to celebrate. With thoughtful design, seasonal touches, and a naturally calming atmosphere, it's a vital part of The Square Club experience.

Non-members are welcome to visit the club during our lunch and dinner service, served from 12–2pm & 6–8:30pm, as well as for select events within our curated events programme. Members receive 50% off lunch on a Monday & Tuesday lunchtime, and 20% off food & drink outside of this. Head to www.thesquareclub.com to book your table.



BRISTOL'S FEMME PROMOTER SCENE

Bristol is a cultural hub. New events, promoters and venues pop up like daisies, each eager to leave a mark, build a community, and celebrate the creative arts whilst having a damn good time. However, a problem that we face is that the music industry is overwhelmingly male-dominated, something we see reflected in both our grassroots and local scenes. Often women, non-binary and queer people face harassment, discrimination and assault whilst being denied opportunities to perform and develop as artists.

So, we've chatted to three event producers who are carving out spaces for women and non-binary people to thrive within the creative scene. Whether they're providing an antidote to the plethora of line ups devoid of diverse talent or creating opportunities for women to re-enter the scene postpartum, these producers are making positive waves in our music industry.



Written by Molly Davies. Davies is a freelance event producer, photographer and musician performing sad-gal-campfire songs turned alt-pop bangers under the stage name MLY.

First up is Underwire Open Mic, an event that lifts up women, non-binary and queer performers in a safe and supportive space. Open mics are often awash with male energy leaving little room for women or those that exist out of the binary to feel a sense of belonging, or open enough to share their work. Underwire Open Mic is different. Each event has a theme, local artists bring paintings to exhibit, furniture, lamps and other decor are used to transform the space, and you'll even find market stalls running alongside the music.

Co-founder, Ella Kinnersley says the event series started randomly through a chance meeting with Holly from the YHA, now Underwire's resident DJ, who let them run their first open mic. It quickly became apparent how important having a space for women in music was.

"After the first one, we really realised the weight of it and how important it was," says Kinnersley. "This is also around the time that I had started working with primarily female-fronted bands and female producers for the first time, so it was at a point in my life where I was recognising the before and after. The before was never feeling completely at home in a very male-dominated scene. Not to mention the countless negative experiences I had experienced all across the scale, from not being taken seriously when I sat down behind the drums at a jam, to outright harassment. It was very healing working with women. Realising that every single one of us had a similar story to tell really drove home the urgency of these spaces. After the first open mic, it just stuck. I think what speaks for itself is that every time I get on the mic and I say how wonderful and vital what we're all doing is, the biggest cheer erupts. There's this palpable understanding of 'this is necessary, we need to be here.'"



Underwire Open Mic by meatgrinder

“

THERE'S THIS PALPABLE UNDERSTANDING OF 'THIS IS NECESSARY, WE NEED TO BE HERE.'"

The collective continues to go from strength to strength, hosting a variety of artists from jazz duos to Americana grunge, to folk and even poetry. Their most recent show packed out The Crafty Egg on Church Road, where the atmosphere was jubilant with each participant equally as eager to share as they were to support. The night concluded with a headline performance from *Who Killed Bunny* that acted as a preview for their Dot to Dot performance the next day.

"It was the biggest turnout we had... it felt like something had shifted. To feel such a sense of community after four events is amazing," says Kinnersley of the night. "There were so many strangers there that I didn't know. One person said, 'I saw that this was an open mic promoting women and non-binary performers and I just had to be here, it was a no-brainer.' I go home glowing after every event. I feel like we're really doing something here and I say 'we' because Underwire is completely run by women, for women (and the non-binary and queer baddies too!). The most recent one was a milestone for sure."

With the glow from the last event still bright, Kinnersley has no intention of slowing down. "I'm looking forward to our artist development initiative evolving. The open mics build people's confidence! They uplift local gems who are sometimes overshadowed on other stages. I'm such a world builder, so the goal in the next 12 months is to watch our themes and capacity for decor flourish. Support-wise in the future, making sure that young creatives are compensated for their time and work is priority number one."

Another collective making waves is *No More All Male Line Ups*. Co-founded by Isabel Russel and Dasha Anderson, No More All Male Lineups is here to prove that there is absolutely no excuse for promoters to overlook the incredible talent of femme and non-binary DJs in the Bristol scene. This year they have done shows at Basement 45 and Motion that incorporate open decks for new DJs to cut their teeth, alongside stellar lineups of women and non-binary talent, and have just announced an evening takeover at Boardmasters Festival.

"Me and Dasher created No More All Male Line Ups because we're just so sick of seeing the same lineups, the same men-white straight men generally - show up on lineups time and time again, there are no new opportunities for women and non-binary people, or people who don't fit into this archetype of what people see a DJ to be", says Russel. "There needs to be more given to female and non-binary people all the way from the bottom to the top. There needs to be more funding invested, there needs to be more training opportunities, there needs to be more opportunities to get booked. There needs to be more record labels, more production opportunities because at every turn, men will be prioritised because unfortunately that's the society we live in but we're trying to change that."

"Honestly having these repeatedly all male or majority male lineups is actually just quite boring. I would really love to explore more underground and diverse talent. I want to listen to the dolls. I want to hear music from all around the world. But unfortunately, even in Bristol, a city that's supposed to be so diverse and supportive, the same white men are getting prioritised and we just kind of wanted to shine a light on that with what we're doing because it's not good enough and it doesn't represent music for me. It's not a good display of what music and DJing actually is."

I have so many friends who are amazingly talented musicians, they're just not given space."

Often, women occupying a small percentage of a space are perceived as occupying more by men. Overbalance towards men has become so normalised. The World Economic Forum reported that in a study by The American Council on Education where teachers were instructed to call on boys and girls in a 50:50 ratio, boys reported that girls were getting all the attention. It seems this attitude permeates and is reflected in lineups. "I've had so many conversations with men and women which, to be honest, have been quite disappointing. They basically say, oh no, we just picked based on talent," continues Russel. "That kind of naivety or ignorance of the issue shows how big of an issue it is, and that men don't even notice that the lineups are boring. For me as a non-binary person, as a femme person, every single time I see a lineup come out on my phone, I scan it to look for someone that's not a white man and it's really hard. A lot of the time no one comes up."



KAROLINA'S JAZZ CLUB



Finally, Karolina Griškutė started Karolina's Jazz Club earlier this year, a bi-monthly jazz night at The Crafty Egg. The nights typically feature one artist playing two sets and are curated around both classic jazz as well as wider genres relating to jazz such as latin jazz or jazz pop.

"I really like having the opportunity to make live events in Bristol and create space for younger and older artists, because a lot of people that run the regular jazz nights have a secret circle approach. With this club I wanted to change the approach of getting the same people all the time" explains Griškutė, "I think the listener appreciates it, having different acts genre-wise, age-wise and gender-wise, not just the same people who are always circulating in the scene, whilst giving people a chance to get back in the scene. As a woman, if you want to start a family or something and you're out of the business for a while it makes it naturally harder to get back into the business."

In the next six months, Griškutė aims to continue curating diverse lineups and creating a space for young jazz artists that are just starting out as well as getting more women on the lineup. "As a jazz singer, there are a lot of jams that are just instrumental and reject singers, especially when you're young and you don't have experience, but that's the way you get experience. It would be lovely to invite more people, not just from Bristol but from the Women in Jazz circle and London."

You can find out more about upcoming events from *Underwire*, *No More All Male Line Ups* and *Karolina's Jazz Club* by following them on Instagram:

@underwire_openmic,
@karolinasjazzclub
@nmamlu_bristol

Karolina by Willow Allen

BRISTOL SOUNDS

Five nights and five icons; this year Bristol Sounds' beloved open-air concerts returned with a bang this year with a week of back-to-back-bangers. This year the lineup is a stacked programme of pop, rock and everything in between, with indie-rock legends Supergrass kicking things off with their 30th anniversary reunion tour, Leeds based indie icons Kaiser Chiefs following, then Scottish icons Texas, indie-rock band The Fratellis, and the final performance from pop sensation Olly Murs.

The Squarely team were delighted to be invited along to a selection of Bristol Sounds events. Here's what they had to say about the events.

SUPERGRASS WEDNESDAY 25TH JUNE

Bristol Sounds kicked off in style with Supergrass as the first headliner for a buzzing Harbourside crowd. I arrived bang on time and was greeted by the sounds of Sports Team warming up the atmosphere, while hot air balloons floated overhead: a truly iconic Bristol scene. After a quick pitstop for chips and a pint, we joined the crowd for Supergrass, who tore through their classic album *I Should Coco* start to finish. Their sound was massive with thumping basslines, electric riffs, and seamless instrument swaps, with even the drummer jumping on guitar for a song. They returned for a few final bangers, rounding off a brilliant first night and perfect Bristol evening.

KAISER CHIEFS THURSDAY 26TH JUNE

It was a night of indie-punk perfection as Lime Garden opened with a gritty, effects-heavy set that primed the crowd for chaos. Kaiser Chiefs stormed the stage, their hollow-body guitar riffs and solos echoing epically across the outdoor venue. Thick bass slides brought a punky undercurrent to their indie anthems, adding grit and nostalgia in equal measure. The crowd was a buzzing mix of ages, all vibing together in a shared, throwback euphoria. A looping background video gave a nod to the band's political edge without pulling focus from the music. Honestly, a 10/10 night all-round.

THE FRATELLIS SATURDAY 28TH JUNE

It was a searing hot Saturday with a line-up to match. The energy was high with Newport icons Goldie Lookin Chain kicking off the day, sporting outfits that would put the most eclectic vintage kilo sale to shame. Stereo MCs brought a radical vibe shift with a thumping, quasi-spiritual set, before Cast took to the stage bringing the sun-soaked, mellow indie vibes. Supporting act Sleeper reminded us why Britpop ruled the music world in the 90s. The main event, of course, was The Fratellis: a crowd of all ages sang their hearts out, and considering they haven't performed in a couple of years, they've never sounded better.



Tickets for next year can be found on the Bristol Sounds website: www.bristolsounds.co.uk



KEEPING IT LOCAL

AT THE BERKELEY SQUARE HOTEL

By Evie Andrews

Whilst some may prefer to jet off to the sunny climes of Johannesburg, the warm spring weather in Bristol has many of us looking closer to home. The dizzying rise of the staycation during and after the pandemic shows no sign of fading away, with 52% of UK holidaymakers choosing to book within the border in 2024 (Consumer Intelligence, 2024).

Moreover, it isn't just hen-dos going feral at Butlins or middle class families cycling aimlessly around Centre Parcs anymore: the domestic tourism industry is now dominated by the British city break.

Bristol accounts for 50% of the total visitor economy in the West of England, with 76% of people staying overnight being domestic visitors (Visit West, 2024). There's no question that Bristol's vibrant events and tourism industry form the backbone of this appeal, but it's worth noting that the bustling economy draws in many business travellers too.

With so many options, it would be easy to book into a chain hotel: they are nothing if not consistent(ly mediocre). I am here to tell you why that would be a mistake; enter The Berkeley Square Hotel.

You may be forgiven for wondering



why I, of all people, have any business whatsoever staying in the Berkeley Square Hotel, located approximately 20 metres from my place of work (Square Works), in the city in which I live. The truth is that my flat in Old Market cannot be described as four star accommodation, and I am nothing if not a flagrant opportunist.

I stayed in a Cosy Double room, the newest addition to the hotel. Created exclusively for sole occupancy, the room is designed to appeal to solo travellers seeking a comfortable and somewhat luxurious stay. Upon first impression, I can confirm that the room was indeed, cosy: the bed, a generous double, was situated next to the window overlooking Berkeley Square. Next to it, the vaguely Klein-blue headboard extends into another corner to form what could be ironically described as a miniature (solo) conversation pit.

From here you can perch and read some of the vintage books in the room, or answer some emails if you are that way inclined. Personally, I decided to tuck myself into bed with a glass of the complimentary Bristol Cream sherry and indulge in some licensed television, which led me to abruptly rediscover exactly why I no longer pay my license fee.

After 15 minutes of that, I decided to draw a bath. I am something of a bath connoisseur, and this particular claw-footed bathtub would not be amiss in a stately home. After an extended Elemis-scented soak, I collapsed into bed after a tough evening of sipping sherry and scrolling on TikTok.

Check out The Berkeley Square Hotel's rooms on their website:

www.cliftonhotels.com/bristol-hotels/berkeley-square

Members of The Square Club get 25% off the best available rate.



I would be lying if I said I was a morning person, but waking up to the birdsong on Berkeley Square almost convinced me. It goes without saying that the birds fled from Old Market a long time ago.

Between the rainfall shower and a steaming cafetière of fresh coffee, I swanned out of The Berkeley Square Hotel lighter than I had been the evening before.

If you're feeling peckish, a cooked-to-order breakfast is available from The Square Club, as well as a buffet with unlimited tea, coffee and juices. Hotel guests benefit from complimentary access to The Square Club during their stay.

I skipped into Square Works at 8:57am, notably not in my usual post-Park-Street state of aerobic distress. Any guests staying at the hotel can enjoy 50% off day passes for Square Works, so if you have calls or need somewhere to meet colleagues in a sophisticated space with complimentary tea and coffee, I'd recommend coming to take a look. I'm not biased, I promise.

Overall, the Cosy Double does feel different to any hotel room I have stayed in before. Quintessentially boutique yet pragmatically-designed, this is the room for any solo business or leisure travellers that want a comfortable base in Bristol.



EYES

On The

HIGHSTREET

By Pascale Loftus



IT'S NO SECRET THAT BRISTOL LOVES AN INDIE. FROM SHOPS TO CAFÉS, RESTAURANTS TO VENUES, ONE RARELY HEARS OF SOMEONE'S FAVOURITE BOLTHOLE BEING A STARBUCKS OR A CÔTE. BUT, WITH GREGG'S INAUGURATION ON THE TRIANGLE, STANDING TALL AS A 'RECESSION INDICATOR' (APTLY PUT BY FELLOW FEATURES WRITER, EVIE ANDREWS), AND WITH GAIL'S CAFÉS POPPING UP LIKE COLD SORES ACROSS THE CENTRE, THE PRECARIOUS NATURE OF INDEPENDENT BUSINESS HAS NEVER BEEN MORE STARKLY APPARENT.





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WHERE ONCE, SMALL BUSINESSES AND POP-UPS RULED THE BRISTOL FOOD SCENE, WE'RE NOW SEEING REAL ESTATE PURCHASED BY THE ONLY ONES WHO CAN AFFORD IT - THE CHAINS. "

The constant gaggle of customers unabashedly clutching their iced Matcha outside of Gail's Clifton flagship acts as a frank reminder that we, as Bristolians need to put our money where our mouth is. We may hold our 'live, laugh, love local' placards high, though have been decidedly apathetic towards the homogenisation of the highstreet, just as long as an oversized cinnamon bun is involved.

We weren't always like this. Bristol's proud history of fiercely protecting independent businesses most likely harkens much further back than the infamous Stokes Croft riots of 2011, though most view these protests as emblematic for the culture. We saw a community furiously resistant to the opening of a chain supermarket, acutely aware of the knock-on effects these would have on the independent local shops people had come to rely upon. The riots fell on the relatively deaf ears of a council blinded by bloodied Meal

Deal money and the golden promise of gentrification. In allowing the supermarket (which will not be named, purely out of spite) not only to survive but to thrive, with little of the concessional restrictions promised to locals, the council turned its back on the community, clearly stating that their allegiance is to the monopoly.

The newest hub for the Bristol food chain seems to be a bit closer to *The Square Club's* home in the City Centre. The Clifton Triangle has always felt somewhat of a transient space to me. Shops and cafés come and go, sometimes leaving empty husks as monoliths to their demise (rest in peace *Wilko*, gone but impossible to forget). From January to April this year, the Centre of Retail research confirmed that 285 shops have gone bust, affecting over 3000 individuals. By March, Bristol had lost eight beloved independents including Bristol's 'oldest vintage' institution, *Uncle Sam's* on Park Street, which operated for over forty

years.* So what's left? Empty shells filled with discarded ephemera? A row of 'TO LET' signs and newspapered windows?

Where once, small businesses and pop-ups ruled the Bristol food scene, we're now seeing real estate purchased by the only ones who can afford it - the chains. I'm talking *Krispy Kreme* popping up less than ten metres from independent donut slingers *Pipp & Co*, *Gail's* planting itself obstinately opposite the coffee-loving-commuter's favourite stall, *Rocco*, and *Gregg's* and *Black Sheep Coffee* colonising the Triangle with affordable fare and decidedly off-putting atmospheres.

So where's a morally superior food-snob supposed to eat? Are we willing to triple our sandwich spend to favour *Little Bagel Co.* over *Greggs*? And, most importantly, where's the rage? Past generations proved they gave a shit, but few of us can claim the same. Maybe the Triangle is losing its edge... maybe we are softening with it. Or perhaps, we are all numb to the homogenisation of our surroundings in such a volatile time for businesses. Consumer ethics are, indeed, much harder to swallow than a pistachio croissant.



It's not all doom, gloom and sourdough, though. Some immovable businesses remain stubborn in their locations, some even thriving in the pressure pot of competition. *Little Bagel Co.* for example, opened a mere three years ago and has now expanded across the city after roaring success, despite being sandwiched between chains. It's also a comfort to know that we may see a thousand more iterations of the hipster coffee shop come and go, but *Jason Donervan* is forever; I don't make the rules.

pooch, Rhubarb can still be seen gazing out through the front door. The obstinate erection of *Gail's* over the road, in place of the late *Little Dobbies*, came shortly following the cafés part-closure which was, frankly, enough to radicalise me. There's no greater satisfaction for the indie snob than breezing past a sea of wide-eyed patrons, with nose upturned and chin held high, on your way to reward your moral superiority with a coffee from *Bakesmiths* or *Oddshop*. Not that anyone cares, of course. Still, everything tastes sweeter from the higher ground.

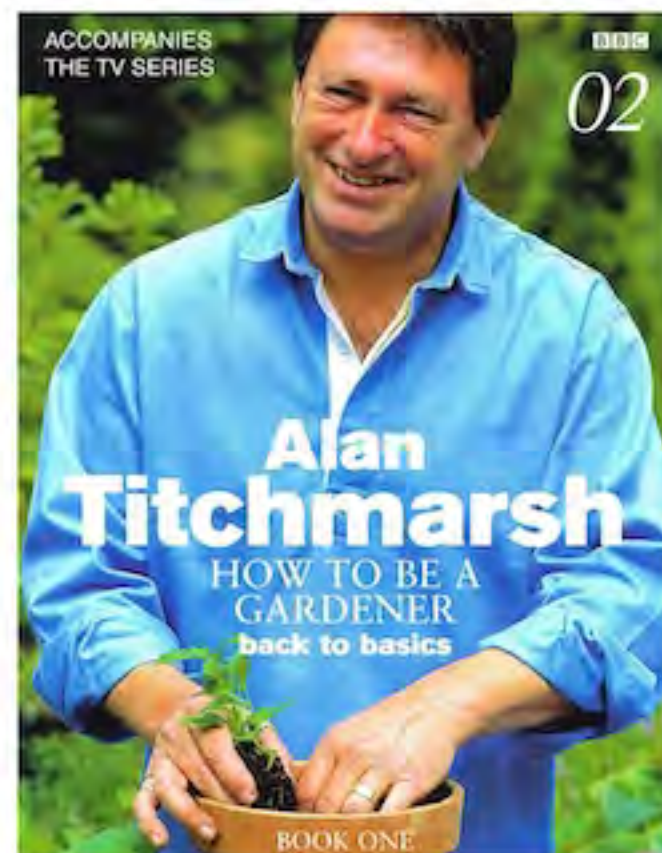
So, the indie scene might be bruised, but it's not broken. As long as we still have a choice between *Rocco* and a *Gail's* flat white, it's on us to vote with our wallets. Bristol has always been a city of defiance and maybe it's time to remember that. In the meantime, pour out some Matcha for indies loved and lost, and raise a steak bake to their memory. The Triangle might be dying, but at least we're caffeinated.

*8 beloved Bristol venues we've sadly lost for good in 2025 so far - and 5 more closing soon', Adriana Amor for Bristol World (12.03.2025) www.bristolworld.com/business/consumer/bristol-venues-lost-2025-5029522



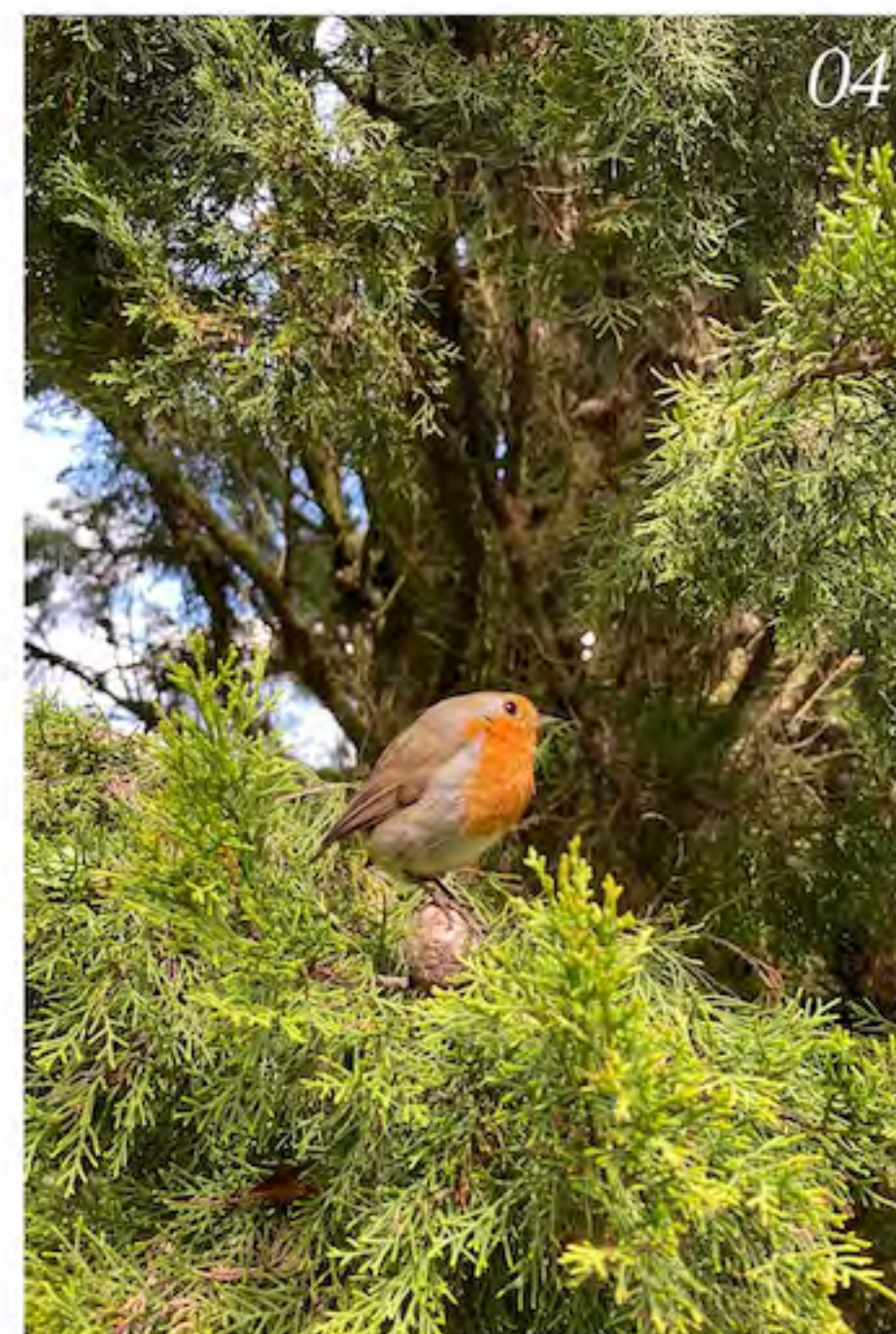
Despite these success stories, the need to adapt, reconfigure and fight for your business has never been more apparent. One particularly bitter pill to swallow was my personal favourite, *NotFoundKitchen* being forced to close as a café. Now relying solely on their wholesale business, *404 Bakes*, the team sadly had to close their doors to the public early this year. They still use the space, and regulars can delight in the fact that the resident

TOP PICK



SUMMER EDIT

From gigs to getaways, the Squarely team shares their top picks of the season.



01 – Festival
Forwards Fest

After reading the Bristol Sounds reviews from the team, I've started gearing up for Forwards Festival this August. Squarely enthusiasts will remember our write-up from last year, and this year's stacked line-up promises even more fun with massive names like Doechi and Olivia Dean headlining. See you there!

- Pascale Loftus

02 – Book
How to Be a Gardener

Having recently moved to Fishponds, I've been lucky enough to get my own garden — and I've found a new hobby (slash obsession). As a complete novice, this book was the perfect starting point. I read it cover to cover, picking up tips on everything from soil and weeds to pruning and planting. It covers a bit of everything, and now I'm ready to dig in.

- Lauren Mulhearn

03 – Comedy
The Gaffe

Just off Castle Park, The Gaffe is Bristol's only dedicated comedy club, and it's fast become a favourite of mine. Whether it's secret headliners or their £2 comedy night every second Tuesday of the month, there's always something on. It's walkable from loads of great bars and restaurants too - ideal if you fancy making an evening of it.

- Jess Fielding

04 – App
Merlin Bird ID

With summer here, I'm soaking up as much time in nature as possible. Since lockdown, birdwatching has become a favourite pastime of mine, really helping me be present when I'm in the great outdoors. The Merlin Bird ID app helps identify birds by sound - just hit record and watch the results come in. I was thrilled to pick up a Spotted Flycatcher on my last walk!

- Sophie Yardley

05 – Location
Farleigh Hungerford

Around a 50 minute drive from Bristol, you'll find one of the best wild swimming spots in the south west. For just £12, you can access the exceptionally well-maintained site with toilets and changing areas all summer. It's less muddy than Warleigh Weir, and regularly has the cleanest river water within driving distance of Bristol.

- Evie Andrews

06 – Restaurant
Emberwood, Bath

Bath's food scene just got a whole lot tastier with the launch of Emberwood — a must-visit this summer. The restaurant stands out for its focus on locality and flame-led cooking, with Executive Chef David Hazell working closely with nearby growers and suppliers to create a menu rooted in simplicity and substance. Expect crisp wines, seasonal dishes, and a lively, open-kitchen atmosphere.

- Laura Baker

HEALING YOUR INNER ARTIST

By Georgia Cudby

In a world that is not always conducive to creativity, creative 'blocks,' imposter syndrome or feelings of worthlessness can sometimes weigh us down and stop us from fulfilling our artistic dreams.

As a writer and actor, I too have found myself drowning in a pool of self-pity at times. So much so that at times, I've reached the point of hauling myself out of the wretched creative waters altogether.

Here are the simple steps I took to restore my passion for creativity and heal my inner artist.

1. STEP AWAY FROM IT

Losing passion for your art can happen for a plethora of reasons, and it's scary. You may end up spiralling, which inevitably, makes matters a lot worse. How can you be a vehicle for creativity if you're panicking? Don't keep prodding an open wound; let it heal. Stop trying, and realise that life goes on without it. It no doubt enriches your life, but the world keeps spinning.

2. FIND YOUR FEAR

This one can take some digging, but it's essential to understand why you are running away from your artistry: what are you scared of? Writing down your thoughts, talking to a trusted friend or even going to therapy will help. For me, my fear was financial. I worried about not having enough savings to secure my future. Once I had spent time addressing this issue logically and calmly, the clouds of doubt cleared from my head and I was able to create freely, once again.

3. BUILD YOUR BOUNDARIES

As a creative, building boundaries, both with yourself, and others, is a crucial part of your practice. When you are so passionate about what you do, with your practice often linked to your identity, a lack of boundaries can have adverse effects. Repeat after me: your career does not define your worth. Your success doesn't define you, you're deserving and worthy of love, health and the occasional head massage. If things aren't going as planned, try not to internalise it too much, it doesn't mean it's your fault. Think about all the ways that you contribute to the lives of others that are not linked to the success of your career. If every time your arts career takes a downward spiral you plummet into the depths of despair, you won't achieve artistic excellence.

4. IDENTIFY YOUR HIGHER PURPOSE

Take the focus away from yourself - when you have a higher purpose other than appeasing yourself, you realise that the creative work you are doing is far more important than your own worries, about whether you'll be seen as a failure or whether your partner will dump you if you don't get a "proper job" soon. The story you are telling becomes more important than yours, and the work gets done.

5. FILL YOUR WELL

Though I'm sure we would all like to say we have conceived a completely original idea, it is unlikely. As artists, we observe our surroundings and receive messages from the universe. Fill your well of inspiration, and say "yes" to as many opportunities as you can to explore the world. Whether you go alone or take a friend, take trips to the cinema, the theatre, an art exhibition or a museum. If you're hibernating in your bedroom, it's unlikely that that spark of genius will appear.

6. GET BACK OUT THERE

Book the class, the workshop, the seminar, and go along with one simple goal: to enjoy yourself. No calculated career moves, just go and let yourself feel the joy of creating with no consequences and find a community of people who share your love. Foster more positive experiences with your craft so you'll be encouraged to pick it up again.

To my fellow artists, I hope this has been useful. Here's to finding those glorious moments where we are suddenly aware that we have created something magnificent, something that means something, which might just make the world a better place.

GENDER STORIES

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF WHEN SOMEONE SAYS THE WORD 'GENDER'?

Discussions about gender have become increasingly fraught in the public sphere in recent years, spurring significant legal changes, considerable media frenzy, and a deepening divide in the United Kingdom.

With so many headlines in the mix, it becomes more important than ever to platform and subsequently empower marginalised voices. *Gender Stories*, a new exhibition opening first in Bristol and then touring at Brighton and Liverpool Museums, explores the complexities of gender identity and its intricate connections to sex, identity and sexuality. Art, after all, is a much better medium than newspapers or daytime television to express complicated and inextricably personal notions of identity.



By Evie Andrews

We spoke to Karen McDonald, Head of Public Engagement at Bristol Museums, to find out more about the exhibition.

Pictured: Artist and Visual Activist Zanele Muholi

WHY EXHIBIT IN BRISTOL, BRIGHTON AND LIVERPOOL SPECIFICALLY?

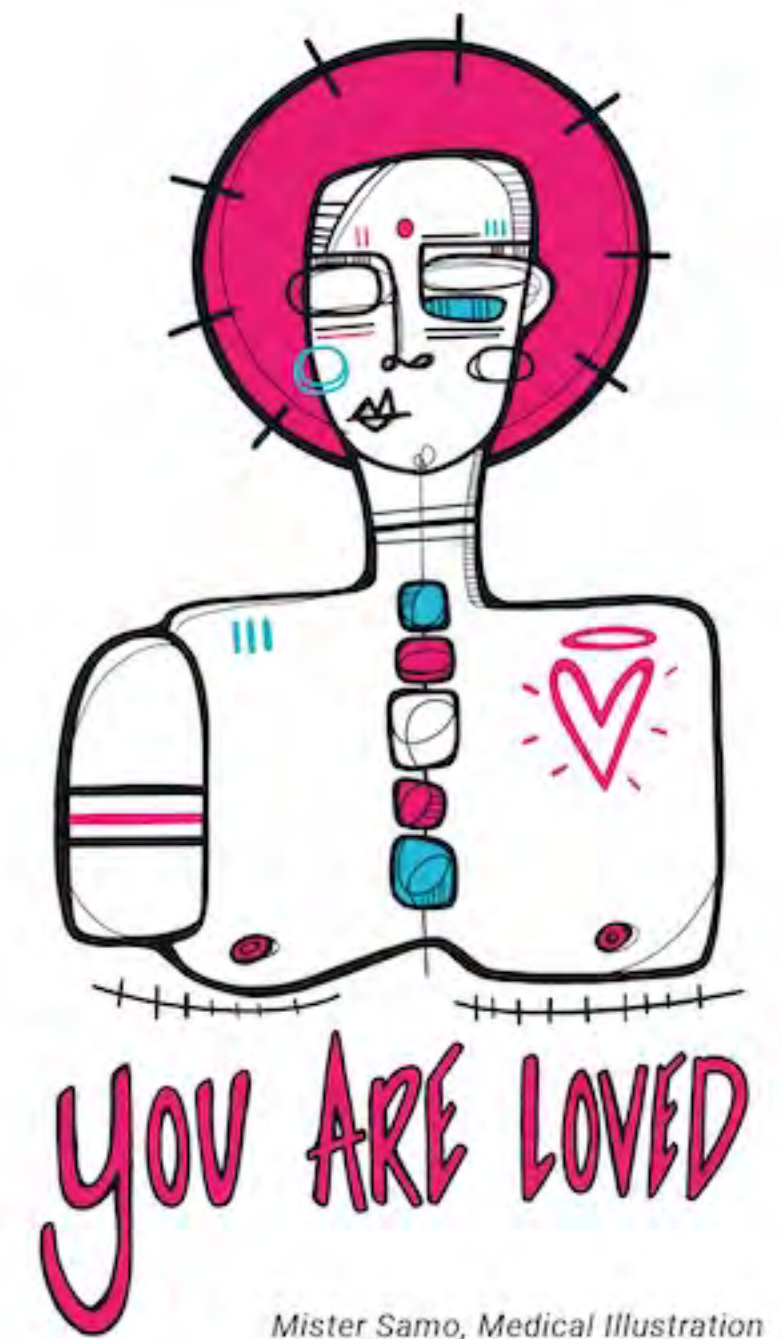
Bristol, Brighton and Liverpool museums services are all part of a national exhibition touring partnership called MAGNET, which is all about creating and touring exhibitions, and sharing our collections and expertise. *Gender Stories* is the first of the exhibitions to open!

Bristol Museum & Art Gallery will also be hosting another MAGNET exhibition called *Colour*, in winter 2026.

Bristol, Brighton and Liverpool are cities with long and vibrant histories of LGBTQIA+ culture. They also all have a reputation for resistance and challenging traditional expectations, often with humour as well as spirit, so really, they are the perfect locations for this exhibition.

DO YOU HAVE A FAVOURITE PIECE IN THE EXHIBITION?

Ooh, lots! I love the Igbo masquerade costume, which is really colourful and joyful. It's used in traditional dances and worn by men, to represent the 'maiden spirit' of female ancestors. I also love Zanele Muholi's work, and we have two of their photographs in the exhibition. One has the artist in a skimpy dress but a traditionally masculine weight-lifter's pose, the other in a suit and hat. They're really powerful images that speak not only to gender but also issues of race and skin colour. Lastly, there are reproductions of some archive court proceedings, where ordinary people in the 19th Century were busting gender norms in various ways with their dress and actions. They show that there have always been trans people living in our society.



Mister Samo, Medical Illustration

WHAT OTHER CONSIDERATIONS MUST YOU TAKE INTO ACCOUNT WHEN EXHIBITING ARTWORK THAT HAS BEEN CREATED OUT OF PROTEST?

Well firstly, most of the artwork and objects in the exhibition are not created out of protest, but they do tell us something about gender and sex. There are natural history specimens, artworks showing representations of traditional gender roles, items of clothing, and lots more. Some of the objects are more protest-focused, for example Fleurre Simpson's 'Fed Up Dress' which was created in response to the murder of Sarah Everard by a serving police officer, protesting male violence against women. Of course, choosing to defy norms is always protest in a way, so we could include things like the artist Gluck's smock, because Gluck refused categorisation.

I guess the things you need to take into account are the same as for showing any museum object. You always have to be aware that there is no such thing as neutral fact, we inevitably read things from the point of view of our own time, place and values. After all, we all have a lived experience of gender. Acknowledging that but also being careful to show meanings in the round, is important. So for example, we will use quotes to help show visitors what the original maker, owner or collector might have intended; or to show a range of perspectives from current commentators.



Fleurre Simpson's Fed Up Dress

SQUARELY

WHAT SORT OF MESSAGE, IF ANY, WOULD YOU LIKE PEOPLE TO TAKE AWAY FROM GENDER STORIES?

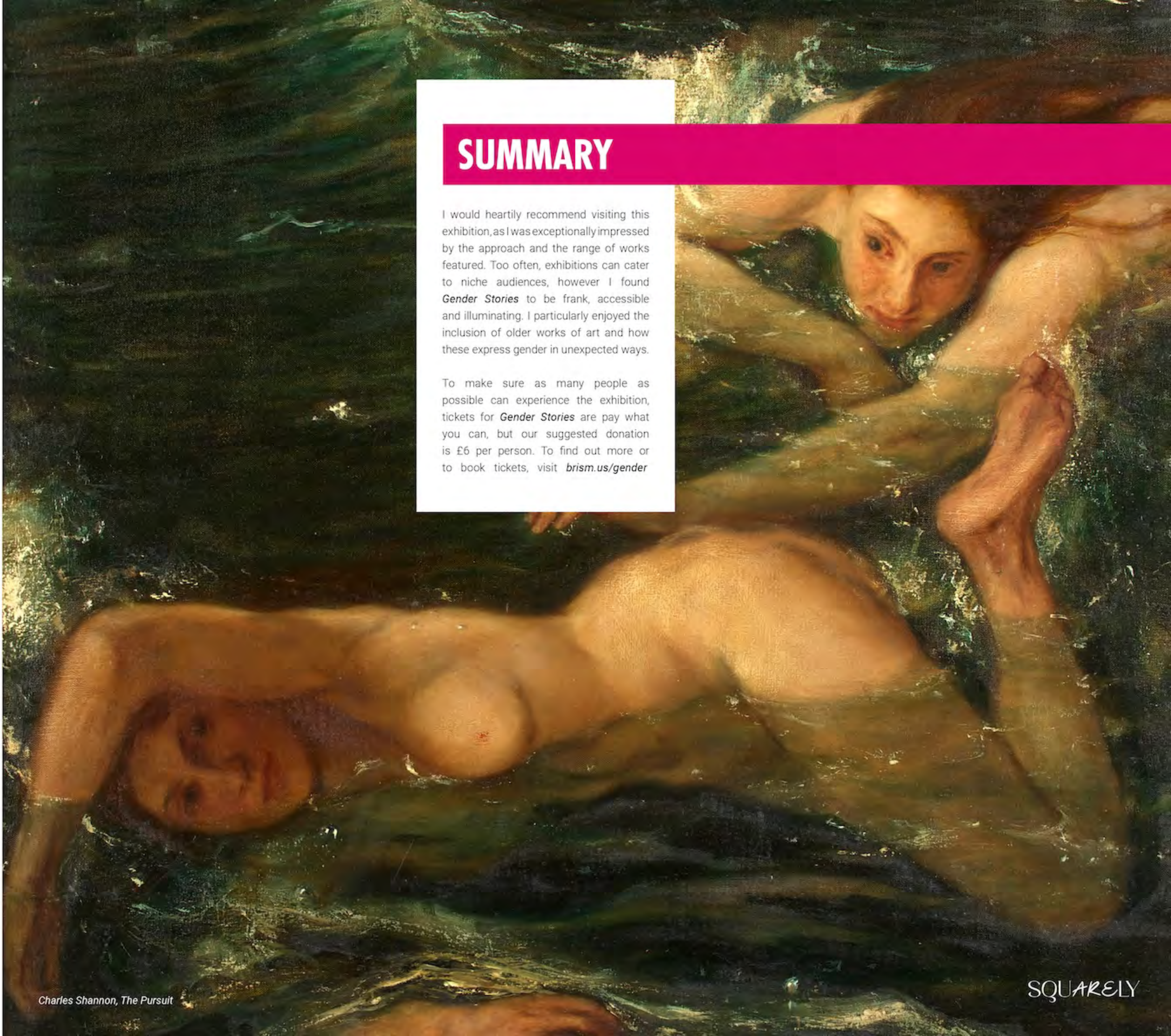
The main message of the exhibition is to be curious and to be kind. If you're not confident or comfortable with gender discussions, the exhibition provides a great way into understanding some of the language and issues and finding your own feet in the subject. If you're an expert in gender theory, you will hopefully still find some stories and some creative expressions that will be new to you. The exhibition is not telling you what to think or believe, but it asks you to approach other people's experiences with kindness and respect, and to be open to discussion and learning in an evolving debate. There is a lot of polarising rhetoric out there and *Gender Stories* shows the complexities.



SUMMARY

I would heartily recommend visiting this exhibition, as I was exceptionally impressed by the approach and the range of works featured. Too often, exhibitions can cater to niche audiences, however I found *Gender Stories* to be frank, accessible and illuminating. I particularly enjoyed the inclusion of older works of art and how these express gender in unexpected ways.

To make sure as many people as possible can experience the exhibition, tickets for *Gender Stories* are pay what you can, but our suggested donation is £6 per person. To find out more or to book tickets, visit brism.us/gender



Charles Shannon, *The Pursuit*

INTRODUCING DARCY WHENT

By Sophie Yardley

Throughout this issue of Squarely, we're exploring what it means to reignite our creativity and tap into the inspiration that the joy of summer brings.

Earlier in these pages, you'll have read our piece on healing your inner artist - a gentle nudge to reconnect with your creative side. As someone currently navigating a creative rut myself, I've come to believe that the best work emerges when you create for yourself, not for others. When you grasp onto what genuinely inspires you, that's when your creativity really begins to thrive.

One artist who embodies this idea is Darcy Whent, whose work is rooted in storytelling, blurring the

lines between memory, imagination and inherited myth. A recent graduate from Bath Spa University (BA Hons, Fine Art, 2023), Whent is now based in Bristol and exhibits her work across the city, from The Mount Without to Circular Art Space.

Like many artists, she balances her practice with other work, confronting the familiar challenges of building a sustainable career. However, Whent eases this tension and shapes it into the emotional undercurrent which informs her work.

In the spirit of creative renewal, we asked Whent to share the inspirations behind her practice and what keeps her imagination alive.



A JOURNEY INTO MEMORY AND TRUTH IN ART

WITH DARCY WHENT

As an artist, my work is deeply concerned with the slippages between memory and truth—how the stories we tell ourselves shape our understanding of who we are, and how these narratives evolve or fragment over time. I often think of memory not as a fixed archive, but as something fluid, shifting with the present moment and our emotional relationship to it. There's a tension I keep returning to: between what actually happened, and what we remember or choose to believe. It's in this liminal space that my practice operates.

I grew up in Wales, and that cultural identity—steeped in oral tradition, myth, and familial storytelling—has had a lasting influence on how I think about narrative. My work isn't about preserving facts, but about evoking a kind of emotional truth. I'm interested in how memory is both unreliable and deeply felt, how it can be distorted by time, repetition, or desire. Through my paintings, drawings, and installations, I often reimagine childhood moments, domestic scenes, or maternal relationships—not to recreate them faithfully, but to capture how they haunt or comfort us in adulthood.

Autofiction is an important tool in my process. I use it to weave together lived experience with imagined elements, creating a kind of psychological realism that feels emotionally honest, even if the details aren't literally true. In doing so, I aim to create

work that feels both personal and strangely universal—images that might prompt viewers to consider their own half-remembered stories or unspoken truths. Formally, I allow this theme to play out through material choices. I'm drawn to surfaces that bear marks, that feel aged or altered—distressed paper, layered paint, stitched fabric. These tactile elements mirror the way memory works: nothing is pristine, everything is palimpsestic. Some things are deliberately obscured or left unfinished, mirroring the way we edit our own recollections.



Ultimately, I'm less concerned with arriving at a single truth and more interested in the act of unearthing—of noticing what lingers and what slips away. I want the viewer to enter into that ambiguity and reflect on the stories they carry too.

Stay up to date with Whent's latest exhibitions and art drops at darcywhent.co.uk



IN THE SPOTLIGHT: BRISTOL BUSINESSES

Among the ever-growing network of independent businesses, Squarely spotlights some of the brightest bulbs in Bristol's chandelier.



PIPP & CO

Nestled just off College Green, Pipp & Co is a sweet spot worth discovering. Pipp & Co isn't your average bakery and coffee stop—it's a heartfelt, family-run business serving up some of the most indulgent doughnuts and pastries Bristol has ever seen. Launched in 2015 by husband-and-wife duo Mario and Betina, Pipp & Co brings passion, craftsmanship, and natural ingredients to every bite.

The secret? A slow, 24-hour proving process, free from preservatives, using local ingredients and a whole lot of heart. From silky custards to juicy homemade jams, everything is made from scratch — and it shows. Whether you're catching up with friends, grabbing a treat on your lunch break, or looking for a cosy corner to escape the city rush, Pipp & Co offers more than just great coffee and handmade bakes—it offers a moment of joy, one bite at a time. Come for the doughnuts, stay for the charm.

www.pipp.co
[@pipp_and_co_cafe](https://www.instagram.com/pipp_and_co_cafe)



RONNI CLOTHING

Ronni is a new independent menswear brand founded in Bristol, specialising in standout printed shirts. With loose tailoring, contemporary artwork and a close eye for detail, these pieces are flexible wardrobe staples for the discerning man.

Ronni aims to impact the environment as little as possible by utilising modern materials like Tencel cloth—made from sustainably sourced wood, Corozo buttons made from nuts and fully home-compostable packaging.

Visit the Ronni pop up on 17th July at 5pm at The Square Club with an exclusive on-the-day discount for members, and explore the full collection on their website.

www.ronniclothing.co.uk
[@ronni_clothing](https://www.instagram.com/ronni_clothing)



NO.4 CLIFTON VILLAGE

No.4 Clifton Village is an independent restaurant and event space nestled in a Grade II listed Georgian townhouse in the heart of Clifton. With a firm stance against high street chains, No.4 champions seasonal menus, local producers, and beautifully restored interiors—all designed to celebrate Bristol's unique culinary scene. Whether it's a wedding, private dinner or corporate celebration, the Secret Garden and elegant rooms offer a refined setting with exceptional service. Explore the venue and book your next event on the website to discover why No.4 is the shining jewel in Clifton Village's crown.

www.no4cliftonvillage.co.uk
[@no.4cliftonvillage](https://www.instagram.com/no.4cliftonvillage)



WILD OATS

Founded in 1981, Wild Oats is Bristol's longest standing independent health and wellbeing shop. What began as a humble wholefoods shop from founders Mike and Loes Abrahams, selling grain from sacks on the floor, has grown into a vibrant hub.

Today, it offers organic wholefoods, vegan and gluten-free staples, natural beauty products, and expert holistic and supplement advice. With regular loyalty discount days and a variety of events, the ethos of Wild Oats is firmly rooted in community. Their friendly, knowledgeable team is always on hand to support your journey to wellness, be it through free in-store consultation or engaging holistic events.

www.woats.co.uk
[@wildoats](https://www.instagram.com/wildoats)

LOCAL HERO

DENNIS STINCHCOMBE



FROM BELTS TO BEATS: CHANGING FUTURES IN BRISTOL

By Jess Fielding

To an outsider cruising off the M32 and into the heart of Bristol city centre, you might not think twice about the blue corrugated steel building on your left. If you're a fellow member of Bristol's night-crowd, it might be a familiar party spot-filled with memories of scrambling for earplugs as you step onto the dancefloor, your favourite DJ playing through a wall-shaking sound system.

But by day, the building tells a different story. It's home to the Broad Plain Boxing Club and Riverside Youth Project, an inner-city boxing gym that's doubled as a lifeline for generations of young people in

Bristol and beyond. The man at its heart is Dennis Stinchcombe MBE: youth worker, mentor, boxing coach, and the driving force behind one of the city's most quietly powerful community spaces.

I sat down with Dennis to talk about the journey that's seen him spend five decades supporting Bristol's youth. With the power of community, a boxing ring, a Banksy, and weekly independent music events, Dennis has shaped something far greater than a club. It's for all of this and more we're proud to name Dennis Squarely's latest *Local Hero*.



“

WE'VE NEVER HAD A PENNY FROM THE LOCAL AUTHORITY, SO EVERYTHING WE OFFER HAS COME THROUGH SHEER DETERMINATION.”

Could you tell us a bit about your background, and how you first got involved in youth work?

This is my 50th year in youth work, so I'm just about getting used to it! It all started when I was 16, playing rugby for St Paul's Rugby Club on Argo Road. The club moved over to Kilkenny St where the old boys club was based. They built a bar there and rugby facilities alongside the boys' club.

I spent a good chunk of my life in the army, but that rugby club was always my second home. One Saturday afternoon after a match, an old friend asked me to cover the youth club upstairs as the leader was off ill. I offered a hand, and never really left!

I eventually took over the club properly. We moved into our current building in 1986 by Riverside Park after raising £400,000, and the club continued from there.

The club's been open since 1894. How has it lasted so long?

It was started by clergy from Highbury Mission in Redland, who are still our trustees. The goal was simple: give young men something purposeful to do. We've never closed, which makes us the oldest and longest-running club in the South West.

We've evolved a lot. What began as a Christian boys' club with uniforms, is now open to everyone, regardless of race, gender or age. But our mission remains the same: get disadvantaged kids off the streets and doing something positive.

I think our longevity comes down to consistent leadership. We've only had a few leaders, most who started as members themselves. 'Once a Broadplainer, always a Broadplainer' isn't just a saying, it's how we operate, and our motto 'Service not self' guides everything we do.

What does the club offer today?

We've never had a penny from the local authority, so everything we offer has come through sheer determination. We've got a climbing wall, snooker tables, a full boxing gym and plenty of sports facilities- we're an open centre for damn near about anything, whether you're here for an activity or just to read a book. We're open five days a week, with plenty happening at weekends too.

We're internationally recognised for boxing and are proud to be championing more women in the sport. Hollie Haskins, now 17, is the England Boxing National Junior Champion, the National Boys and Girls clubs Champion, Tri Nations Champion and European Champion-one to watch!

We used to run a brilliant alternative learning programme for kids in tough circumstances. It closed due to SEND budget cuts, but we now host similar sessions with the Robins Foundation.

We're also incredibly proud of our Thursday morning boxing group for people with Parkinson's, a nationally recognised programme backed by Parkinson's UK. The "Wobbly Boxers" (their name, not mine!) range in age from 44 to 86 and start each session with



tea and a chat, followed by an hour of training. The transformation is incredible—they shuffle in on Thursday mornings and leave buzzing with energy. When they tell me this place has given them their life back...well, that's what it's all about.

Of everything you've achieved, what are you most proud of?

Every kid we've kept off the streets and out of prison is the real achievement. In the five decades I've worked here, we're talking thousands of young lives turned around and millions saved for the community. That's why authorities should be backing clubs like ours. In supporting us now, they could save millions in policing and prisons.

That said, the MBE I received in 2004 was very special, it felt great to be recognised by Her Majesty for the work I've done, and being seen as valuable to my country.

The truth is, now more than ever, kids need what we've always offered—discipline, rules, and a place to burn energy. Sports teach you to practice discipline and follow rules, and push yourself to achieve - life's no different. But somewhere along the way, we've lost sight of that. Too many young people have lost respect for their parents, the police, and most importantly themselves. And when respect goes, what's left?

What do you think is the biggest challenge facing young people in Bristol at the moment?

Social media, isolation, and violence. Kids are constantly exposed to horrific content online and it's warping their sense of reality. Without real structure or positive social spaces, they're more vulnerable to gangs, county lines, and knife crime.

Knife crime in Bristol at the moment is the worst I've ever seen. One stabbing doesn't just affect one family, it affects whole communities. Some kids are scared to even make it to the club, and parents fear that their kids won't make it home. That's not right, and it has to change.

With all that in mind, how would you describe Riverside's role in the community?

We are an open centre, available day and night for young people to come and develop themselves in a safe space, at their own pace.

When I think about that, I know I'm a lucky man. I love getting up and going to Broadplain, getting down there each day and doing what I do for young people because that's why I'm on the earth. And aren't I lucky that I like my job? When people come to the club,



I'm happy to be the one with a smile on my face. That ain't a bad thing is it?

I've been enjoying your music events for a while now. How did they start?

Well they were never part of the plan. Years ago, Al Fresco Disco asked to use our space for their New Year's party. They were brilliant - one of the best events I've seen here. They had a great crew, and none of the party goers knew where the event would be in the country until 9pm on New Years Eve, but somehow they made their way there! That was the beginning of where we are today.

Now we've got JJ managing the music side of things which we call 'The Boxing Gym'. We've got a real range of events on, from market days and fairs to day and night events of all different styles and genres—and to be fair, they're bloody good. JJ and his crew have had such a positive impact, making people more aware of our events and the impact they have on our club. Without the music, we'd be £50-60,000 lighter each year. With bills like ours (our monthly electricity bill is £2500!) that support is vital, and to be honest with you, without them, we might not still be here.

Who's helped you keep things going?

My wife Edna is my rock. We've fostered over 130 children together, and she got her own MBE in 2010. I couldn't do any of this without her.

Our lead volunteer Ricky Jones and his team work six days a week to keep the lights on. Them, and the young people running the music events are brilliant: passionate, committed, and proud to raise money for the club.

What do you see for the future of the Riverside Youth Project?

In 2028, a state-of-the art centre is being built which will include a brand new

“

THANKS TO BANKSY, THOUSANDS OF KIDS HAVE BENEFITTED AND, WITHOUT THEIR SUPPORT, THE CLUB WOULD HAVE CLOSED BACK IN 2014."

boxing gym. It'll have an even greater impact on the area with Young Bristol running the community side of the club.

My focus is to keep doing what we're doing at the pace we're doing it, and with a bit of luck that will see us through to 2028, when I can retire and pass on Broadplain's legacy to our next leader, whoever that may be. When that time comes around, I'd love to be president of the boxing section of the club, sitting on board meetings and handing out awards in the new space.

I have to ask about the Banksy...in 2014, Banksy painted Mobile Lovers on the club's door overnight. Can you tell us what happened, and what impact it had on the club?

Back in 2013, the club was struggling as I was unwell and wasn't around to keep things running. I put out a public Crowdfunder to ask for support. What I didn't realise at the time was that Banksy had been a member here as a child, moving between us and another nearby youth club.

One Sunday morning, we found a piece of art in our yard mounted on our old noticeboard and screwed to our wall underneath a streetlight. My son spotted it first and said, "I think you've got a Banksy".

We stood guard over it for a few days, and on the Tuesday it was authenticated by Banksy's team, Pest Control, to be their new piece 'Mobile Lovers'. When I turned up that morning, there were so many people

outside I thought there'd been a murder.

That was the start of weeks of arguments with the council over ownership - I've never done so much press in my life. In that time, the piece was taken to the police station and locked in the cells for safekeeping, before being displayed at Bristol Museum, where over 750,000 people came to see it.

A few weeks later, I received a letter from Banksy who stated the piece belonged to me and that I could do with it what I pleased. After I had the letter authenticated, we sold Mobile Lovers for £560,000. £96,000 went to a children's charity, and the rest has kept the club going to this

day. Thanks to Banksy, thousands of kids have benefitted and, without their support, the club would have closed back in 2014.

If someone reading this wanted to get involved or help out, what's the best way for them to do that?

Anyone is welcome to come and help us out-we're always looking for volunteers in different capacities, whether supporting in the running of our clubs or just helping with decorating or maintenance. We do also have a Crowdfunder which is under Edna's name, which obviously is a huge help for us. Other than that, keep an eye out for our music events! Would be great to see some new faces there.

For over 130 years, Broadplain & Riverside Youth Centre have been at the heart of Bristol's community. To help continue this vital legacy and support Dennis' passion for empowering Bristol's youth, we invite you to get involved in any way you can. Whether it's attending a music event at the boxing gym, contributing to Dennis' Crowdfunder, or volunteering your time, every bit of support helps keep Broadplain's spirit alive for generations to come.



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TRY BRISTOL'S ONLY FLEXIBLE WORKSPACE
AND PRIVATE MEMBERS' CLUB

As part of our Members' Circle feature, we catch up with a stand-out Square Club member. This issue, we sat down with the brilliant Euella Jackson.

You often hear of people who light up a room—Euella Jackson changes the energy entirely. With an effortless confidence, Jackson carries the air of someone who knows exactly who she is. She is an inspiring figure in Bristol's creative scene; over the past decade, she's been building platforms, creating content and nurturing a creative community—all with the goal of inspiring and empowering others. Her work is a reflection of her values, and it's clear: Jackson isn't just telling stories, she's building spaces where others can thrive.

As an award-winning presenter, filmmaker and creative producer, Jackson is known for her work that blends storytelling, activism and community-building. Since 2021, she's been Co-Director of Rising Arts Agency, a youth-led social enterprise advocating for underrepresented young creatives, a role she'll step down from next year.

Jackson's projects often tackle themes of social justice and representation. Her short film *Capsule*, commissioned by the Bristol Climate & Nature Partnership, explores the intersection of climate and social issues, envisioning a hopeful future. Additionally, she hosted the BBC series *The Audacious*, which highlights young people addressing climate change with optimism and creativity.

We spoke with Jackson to reflect on her journey so far, the power of community, and what lies ahead for one of Bristol's most dynamic creative voices.

EUELLA JACKSON

MEMBERS' CIRCLE



Looking back on your career so far, how do you feel your creative journey has unfolded? Has your sense of purpose and drive always been there, or has it evolved along the way?

I'm always thinking about legacy and integrity in storytelling. I've always been driven, but I've enjoyed reflecting on how my creative practice has changed over the years. When I was younger, I was certain I was going to be a rapper—I love words and music. I'd spend so much time writing and recording music. Then it was theatre, spoken word poetry, content creation, and now presenting and film-making. Who knows what I'll be doing next.

Early in my career, I felt like people didn't know what to do with me as I loved being both in front of and behind the camera. I love writing, producing, presenting, directing and performing. I've been determined that I want to do it all and do it all well. I've always been ambitious (or maybe a bit stubborn) in that way. I spent a lot of time daydreaming, but I guess that's meant I've never actually heard anyone when they've said "no, you can't do that."

What advice would you offer to young creatives still finding their footing?

Be generous: help people, be useful, and keep at it. You're aiming for progress, not perfection. Find your people, lean on them and collaborate. Make it easy for people to help you and remember you.

Bristol's creative scene is thriving and ever-evolving. How have you found navigating it, and what has helped you resist the pull of places like London?

I grew up not far from London, but my parents were born and grew up in Bristol. I was lucky enough to study in L.A for a year but went to university here and stayed. After that, I found a creative community almost immediately and that was a big help. Getting a content creator role at Rife

“**BEING ALIVE AND PRESENT IN THE WORLD IS ULTIMATELY WHAT MAKES YOUR ART BETTER, NOT COMPETITION AND BURNOUT.”**

Magazine/Watershed was my biggest flex ever—they helped me more than even I know. Bristol is sexy. It's home. I think cities like London are losing their appeal because people (especially post-pandemic) are realising that work isn't everything. You're bigger than what you can create or produce, you matter outside of your job title or showreel. People want a fulfilling and whole life. They want people that smile at them on the street. They want connection and community. Being alive and present in the world is ultimately what makes your art better, not competition and burnout.

Whenever I think about leaving, I remind myself that I'm trying to build a legacy here, and Bristol is part of my story. My parents felt that they had to leave Bristol to make it, but I feel pride that I'm able to come back and do what I love. That's not to say I'll never leave, but it's a place that I love for its activism, creativity, and rebellious spirit. Those are things I need to thrive, and it'll be hard for other cities to top that. To me, Bristol is about community, and seeing as we'll no doubt have tough times ahead, community is all that's going to matter in the end.

Your film Capsule explores a hopeful future in the face of climate and social challenges. What was it like to create that vision?

It was so surreal. My favourite part was being on set. The energy was indescribable. I remember waking up

the day after wrapping and crying with gratitude for the cast and crew for bringing it to life. The magic we created was so special. Even though it's a very optimistic short, it didn't start that way. I really appreciate Bristol Climate & Nature Partnership (the commissioners) for steering it down a hopeful path, because hope is something that's really lacking in storytelling right now, especially when it comes to climate and social justice. Climate issues often feel so removed from people's daily life, and can feel so big and unwieldy. With *Capsule*, I wanted to take it right down to something small and explore it on a micro-level between a child and their grandmother. It feels like the climate crisis isn't a crisis of technology or potential, it's a crisis of imagination and will. Our role as storytellers is to get people excited about what the future could be like. I hope *Capsule* is part of that.

How do you maintain an optimistic point of view in the face of the ever increasing climate anxiety that so many people feel?

Some days are easier than others, but it's mainly by being a little delulu [delusional]. But all jokes aside, it's really community—having comrades and doing things together. Literally going outside and touching grass. The thing about eco-anxiety is that it's incredibly isolating and takes you out of the present because you're so worried about the future. The antidote is being with people who are doing things that are making a difference



to regular people—whether it's through the stories they tell, their volunteering, or how they show up for their loved ones. It makes such a difference. But being a young person trying to navigate the future feels impossible right now. All I can do is stay present and tend to the things that are right in front of me—that's what gives me energy to go on the frontlines, and demand better for everyone.

Your career has been filled with so many powerful projects and stand out moments. What have been some of your personal highlights along the way?

There are so many! I'm incredibly lucky that I get to do things that literally set my soul alight, such as filming *Capsule*. Being nominated as a 2025 Big Issue change-maker in January, was so unexpected and such an affirming way to start the year-to be recognised on such a national level.

Presenting the Nature Restoration Series with WWF directed by Anna Roberts was a massive highlight in 2022 and it took me way out of my comfort zone. I travelled all over the country and got to meet some incredible people who are making a difference. It also led to us filming a BBC digital series called *The Audacious* which I presented. Whenever I'm feeling a bit low, I watch it and it gives me a real boost.

In 2020, my friends and I staged a protest photo by Jen Reid's statue in the centre following the toppling of the Colston Statue. The photos were taken by Ruby Walker and we weren't expecting it to have as much of an impact as it did. When we went down to the statue, all dressed in black with our fists raised, we weren't expecting the public to be so supportive, they were cheering and taking photos of us, and it felt like a celebration of black womanhood in public space.

Last but not least, working at and becoming a Co-Director of Rising Arts Agency at just 27—there have been so many powerful moments that I've been a part of since working at Rising.

As you prepare to step down from the Rising Arts Agency next year, how has this chapter shaped you, both creatively and personally?

I actually didn't expect for this question to make me as emotional as it has. It has been a career and life-defining milestone for me. Rising is such an incredibly special gem—for the city, for the sector and for young creatives. It has brought so much hope and purpose to me, and enabled me to step into my bad b*tch energy. I'm definitely a lot less apologetic and it's given me permission to be the change I want to see, and build things that don't yet exist. From billboard campaigns and

policies, to exhibitions and consultancy, I've been able to try my hand at so many things that have made me a better leader and creative. Being a Co-Director has been such an honour, not only because of the community, but also because of my Co-Director, Jess Bunyan. Jess is an absolute powerhouse and a force of a woman. I've learnt so much and it's been such a joy to be able to step into my power as both a young woman and a leader alongside her. I have been institutionalised (or maybe deinstitutionalised) in the best possible way at Rising, and I have no idea how anything I do next will come close to topping it.

Looking ahead, what does the next chapter hold for you?

I honestly have no idea. I'm kind of going wherever the river of life carries me. As long as I'm telling stories, standing up for what I believe in and building a legacy that my descendants can be proud of, I'm good.

What are the hopes you have for the future of our city's creative community?

I hope there will be more investment in talent. More blurring the boundaries between different disciplines and industries. More risk-taking and challenge. More care, and more humanity.

Euella Jackson is many things, a storyteller, leader and visionary, but above all, she's a force of nature, showing us that the sky really is the limit. Euella reminds us of the power and strength that we can find within our communities, and demonstrates that hope isn't a luxury, but a discipline. Her passion for learning is infectious, inspiring those around her to stay curious. Wherever her path leads, it's clear she'll continue telling the stories, and cultivating spaces that make the future feel that little bit brighter.

www.rising.org.uk
www.euellajackson.com



“BE GENEROUS-HELP PEOPLE, BE USEFUL, AND KEEP AT IT. YOU'RE AIMING FOR PROGRESS, NOT PERFECTION.”

JET SET

MESH CLUB JOHANNESBURG

"Common Ground for Uncommon People"

"THE CITY HAS LAYERS, AND EVERY VISIT REVEALS SOMETHING NEW. YOU JUST NEED A CURIOUS SPIRIT AND AN OPEN HEART."

As an independent private members' club dedicated to Bristol's creative industries, we've partnered with over forty esteemed members' clubs worldwide to offer our community exclusive reciprocal access during their travels. Each reciprocal club in our collection has been thoughtfully selected to ensure their values align with ours.

So wherever your journey takes you, you can trust there's a welcoming home away from home waiting for you.



For this Jet Set feature, we're delighted to introduce you to MESH Club in Johannesburg.

Nestled in Johannesburg's vibrant Keyes Art Mile, MESH Club is a space for entrepreneurs, creatives, and industry leaders to connect, work, and socialise. Embodying the ethos of "common ground for uncommon people," MESH offers a dynamic environment that blends functionality with inspiration.



Members enjoy access to versatile workspaces and meeting rooms, all complemented by concierge services and wellness offerings. The club's interiors showcase a striking juxtaposition of contemporary art and design, featuring works by both emerging and established South African artists. Beyond its physical space, MESH fosters a unique community through regular events; music, art and cocktails are accompanied by sunsets and interesting conversations, bringing extraordinary people together.

We had the pleasure of catching up with Luyanda Dladla, Events Coordinator for MESH CLUB and The Keyes Art Mile, to discover more about the club, and get all the insider tips for planning your trip to Johannesburg.

How would you describe Johannesburg to someone who's never been?

Johannesburg is a city of contrasts and energy, it is raw, real, and constantly reinventing itself. It's where history and innovation collide, where creativity pulses through the streets, and where people are unafraid to dream big. The city is always awake and alive, always buzzing with ambition, movement, and a deep sense of purpose. It's full of hardworking individuals who

are here to grow, to build, and to live a better life. Joburg isn't just a place you visit, it's a place you feel, a city that grabs you with its intensity and leaves you inspired.

What inspired the creation of MESH Club, and how does it contribute to the spirit of Johannesburg?

MESH was born out of a desire to create a space that embodies the entrepreneurial and artistic pulse of Johannesburg. It's more than a members' club, it's a community of thinkers, creators, and doers. By offering a curated space for collaboration, conversation, and culture, MESH contributes to the city's forward-thinking and creative identity.

Where would you recommend staying when visiting the city?

The Rosebank and Sandton area is ideal for visitors, it's safe, vibrant, and centrally-located. The Four Seasons in Westcliff, 54 on Bath, and The Peech Hotel offer stylish, comfortable stays with great access to the city's key attractions. For those wanting a more boutique experience, there are some beautiful guesthouses tucked away in leafy suburbs like Parkhurst and Melville.



What are your go-to places to eat, drink and soak up the local vibe?

I love the energy at Coalition for amazing pizza, Marble for a luxurious dining experience, and The Pantry for something casual yet elevated. For drinks, Sin + Tax is a hidden gem cocktail bar, and Mix Bar at Keyes offers great views and even better vibes. Keyes Art Night provides Johannesburg residents with a distinguished platform to exhibit their creations, immerse themselves in compelling visual art, and partake in an evening enriched by culture and ambiance.



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What are your insider tips for places to see, cultural experiences, or hidden gems that give a real sense of Joburg?

The Johannesburg Art Gallery and the Wits Art Museum offer beautiful and often overlooked collections. Nirox Sculpture Park on a Sunday gives you live music, art, food, and people-watching all in one. Constitution Hill is a powerful site of history and transformation, and catching a show at the Market Theatre is always a good idea. For a deeply rooted experience, step onto Vilakazi Street in Soweto, where history hums beneath your feet and the spirit of the nation comes alive. Amid the rhythm of street musicians and the aroma of traditional dishes, you'll find Nelson Mandela's former home, a powerful reminder of resilience, hope, and the journey to freedom.

What's your favourite thing about being based in Johannesburg—and what should visitors know that they might not expect?

What I love most about Johannesburg is its electric energy; it's bold, vibrant, and full of possibility. The people here are some of the friendliest and welcoming you'll ever meet, always ready to connect, share a story, or point you toward something exciting. Joburg has a surprising side too, beneath the fast pace, you'll find lush green spaces, quiet corners, and an undeniable sense of soul. There's so much to explore here, from culture and cuisine to art and history. The city has layers, and every visit reveals something new. You just need a curious spirit and an open heart.

Where will your Square Club membership take you next?

Reciprocal access is available to members via Sonato Alliance.

www.meshclub.co.za

MESH Club, 2nd Floor Trumpet On Keyes, 21 Keyes Avenue, Rosebank, JHB



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