

**BLACKHORSE  
WORKSHOP**

# **MAKING HISTORY 2014— 2019**



**FIVE YEAR IMPACT REPORT**

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Carmel Mannion, Sculptor + Installation Artist, 2018



# **PART 1**

# **MISSION & HISTORY**



# MISSION

Blackhorse Workshop is a social space for making in Walthamstow, which is open and accessible to everyone from beginners and hobbyists through to creative entrepreneurs. With affordable access to tools and expertise, alongside a wide variety of classes and programmes, the workshop enables people to learn new skills and develop projects, and supports the establishment and growth of new businesses.

Blackhorse Workshop cultivates, disseminates and advocates for a culture of making as the focal point of communities.

It has five main strands to its activities which support its mission:

- 1 Open access to woodwork and metalworking tools and machinery**
- 2 Affordable desks and studios for makers at any stage of their career**
- 3 Basic to advanced skills training in wood and metalwork techniques for all ages on and off-site**
- 4 Creative projects and events developed in partnership with cultural organisations and the local community**
- 5 Advocacy for making**

“Blackhorse Workshop has been a major force in defining the area's identity as a destination for the creative industries. Through its provision of affordable space, workshop facilities, and technical support it has attracted new creatives to the borough, inspired new business start-ups, and provided a space for businesses to grow. It has been a key part of the infrastructure necessary to supporting our ambition for building a successful Creative Enterprise Zone.”

Rebecca Davey, Assistant Director for Employment, Business and Skills, London Borough of Waltham Forest



# KEY FACTS



## OUR LOCATION

The Waltham Forest ward of Higham Hill, where the workshop is based has:

- Higher than the national average number of economically inactive adults (28% vs 23% in the rest of the UK)
- Higher than the national average population of working-age adults (43% vs 34% in the rest of the UK)
- Higher than average claims for out of work benefits (20% vs 13% in the rest of the UK)
- Young people who battle a saturated jobs market and are on average less qualified than their London peers
- Higham Hill ranks as second most deprived ward in Waltham Forest (Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2015), and Waltham Forest is the seventh most deprived London Borough.

## IN 5 YEARS OF BLACKHORSE WORKSHOP

360 adults have attended women-only courses taught by women

2,600 people have been trained to use tools and machinery independently

2,500 children have attended making activities at summer festivals

3,000 adults have attended over 500 classes

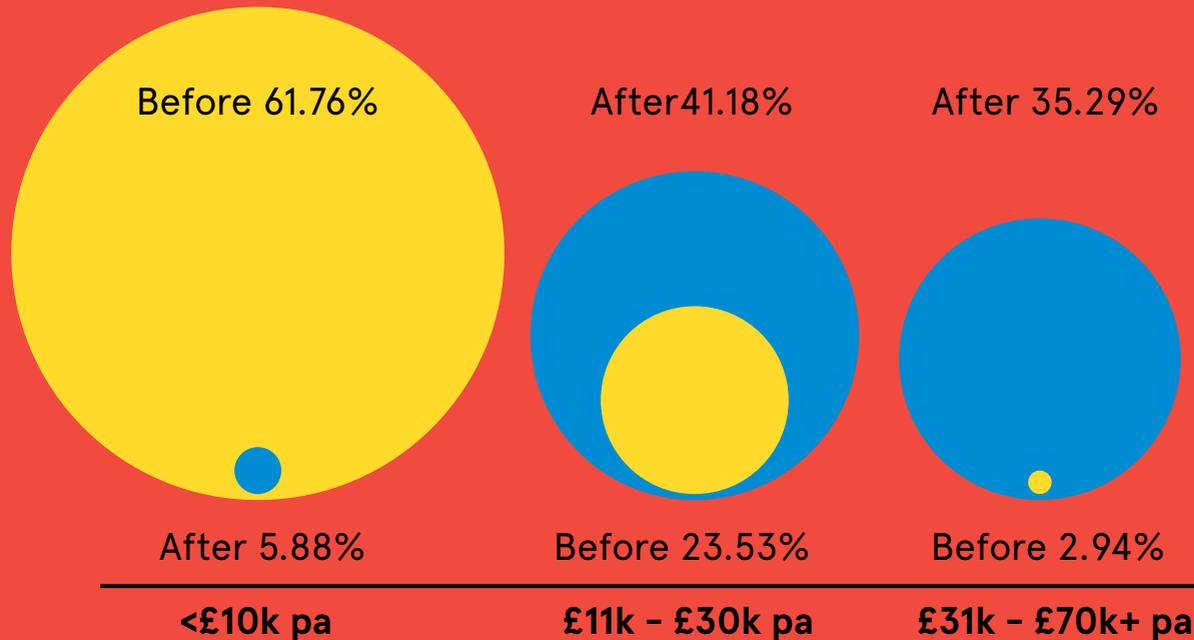
46 creative businesses established at the workshop

# KEY BENEFITS FOR MEMBERS

"It offers a pretty much unrivalled facility for me to make my living, expand my technical knowledge and find work opportunities."

James Kelly, Member

## INCREASED TURNOVER



## AFFORDABILITY

75% of members rate flexible bench booking/ affordability and opportunities to learn new skills as very important in their use of the workshop

## CREATIVE COMMUNITY

87% said they felt part of a community of makers after joining the workshop

## GROWING A NETWORK

71% members have worked on collaborative projects with other members from the workshop

# BACKGROUND



**“The Workshop is envisaged as a new model for a public place of learning based on making. Celebrating the process of learning through doing, the project is based on the understanding that making things in a social environment is not only enjoyable, but educational and empowering.”**

London Borough of Waltham Forest submission for the Outer London Fund 2013

Blackhorse Workshop was established as part of a wider regeneration project by London Borough of Waltham Forest and the Mayor’s Outer London Programme 2013 for the Blackhorse Lane area. The project was intended to support the local economy of existing manufacturing industries and celebrate the area’s industrial heritage.

It was conceived as a project that would help to develop the area’s culture of craftsmanship, and was targeted at local people with an interest in making to boost enterprise and develop skills. The original proposal, design and development of the space was carried out by the Turner Prize winning architecture collective Assemble, and was commissioned by the London Borough of Waltham Forest and funded through a consortium of funders including Create London, Arts Council England and the London Legacy Corporation.

For Assemble, the workshop was an early project that explored their vision for community led spaces and places for making. They continue to be actively involved in an advisory capacity and returned to manage the building extension project in 2016.

In 2015, London Borough of Waltham Forest commissioned a feasibility study around the possibility of establishing a Creative Enterprise Zone at Blackhorse Lane. The vision was to establish the area as one of London’s principle creative business locations. To achieve this some key recommendations were made including:

- **“to retain creative companies in Blackhorse Lane; supporting them to stay and grow within the area”**
- **“to support a tangible business community, visible in terms of networks and commercial relationships”**
- **“to offer entry points for creative industries for all residents and participants regardless of background or previous educational attainment”**

These have since become our guiding principles in growing the organisation.

# THE BLACKHORSE TEAM



Key to Blackhorse Workshop's success has been the selection of the original staff team, whose experience, skillset and ambitions have shaped its development.

The project's Director, Harriet Warden had previously been involved with other start up projects and a background of 15 years working across the arts, so had a good understanding of how to take it forward on a tight budget. As the idea of an open access workshop was a relatively new concept – it was vital from the start to be open to ideas from users and take an experimental approach. Maintaining a welcoming environment, offering positive support and a generosity of spirit have all played a major role in creating the vibrant community that has developed over the last 5 years.

The original technical team, Toby Poolman (wood specialist) and Rob Shaer (metalwork specialist) meant that practical skills could be shared that members could learn from and develop their experience. Both had their own creative practices, which informed their understanding of the

needs of freelance and hobbyist makers. Furthermore, both had prior teaching experience, which in turn supported the development of the workshop's own skills training programme.

From an early stage, the workshop also brought in Counter Culture LLP, an organisation that supports creative businesses to 'plan, manage and thrive'. Their expertise has been key to creating a viable business model and ensuring financial stability amongst the challenges of London's creative economy.

The team has continued to expand, building on support for admin side of the business, programme development, financial management and teaching delivery.

As a Community Interest Company, the organisation is supported by a board who meet quarterly, and actively support the project's development. This is made up from volunteers working in the fields of making, social enterprise, community projects and finance.

# DEVELOPMENT OF THE SPACE

The space has evolved with the project as different needs were understood more clearly – both from a maker perspective and from a financial one. The benefits of a yard offering outdoor ‘messy’ workspace, and free parking (both a rarity in central London) quickly attracted larger scale projects.

As seasons changed, it became necessary to provide a sheltered work area from harsh weather and a funding application was made for extending the building on both sides with a covered outdoor working area, dedicated café, reception and offices. Freeing up interior space enabled the creation of a space to expand our education programme, and three ground floor self-contained studios for members who outgrow the desk units on the first floor.

As individual businesses grew, the workshop needed to increase its ‘grow on’ studio space, and looked to raising the finance to purchase 8 converted shipping containers to create flexible workshops that could be moved if it became necessary to move to a different site in the future.

The commitment and support of London Borough of Waltham Forest has been invaluable – through provision of the building at a peppercorn rent and match funding of both the building extension and container developments.



# BUILDING + ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT



Assemble propose project in response to open brief from London Borough of Waltham Forest

FT Creative Director, 2 x PT Workshop Technicians recruited to set up the project

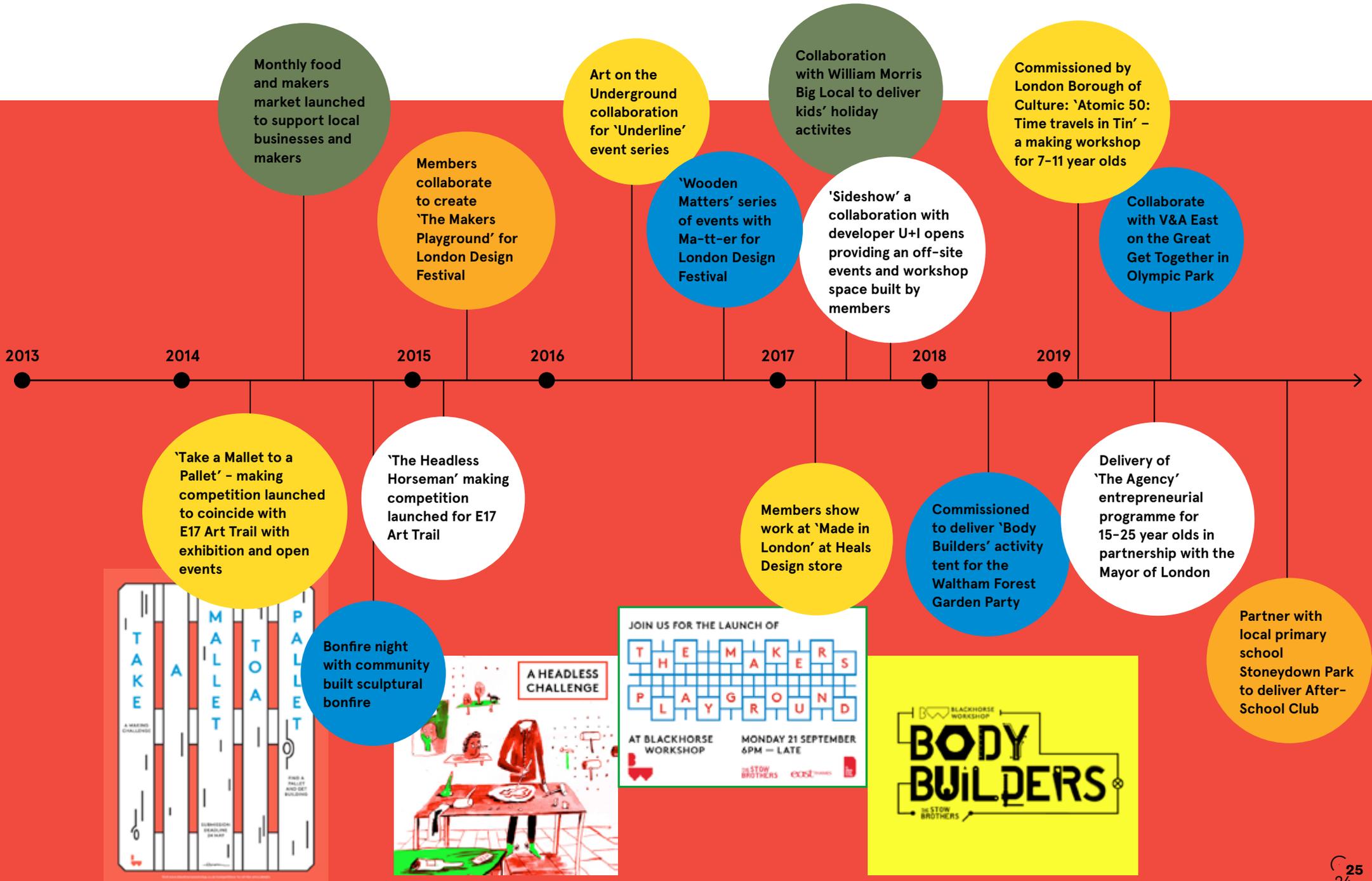


Nominated for 'Best Led Community Project' in London's Planning Awards

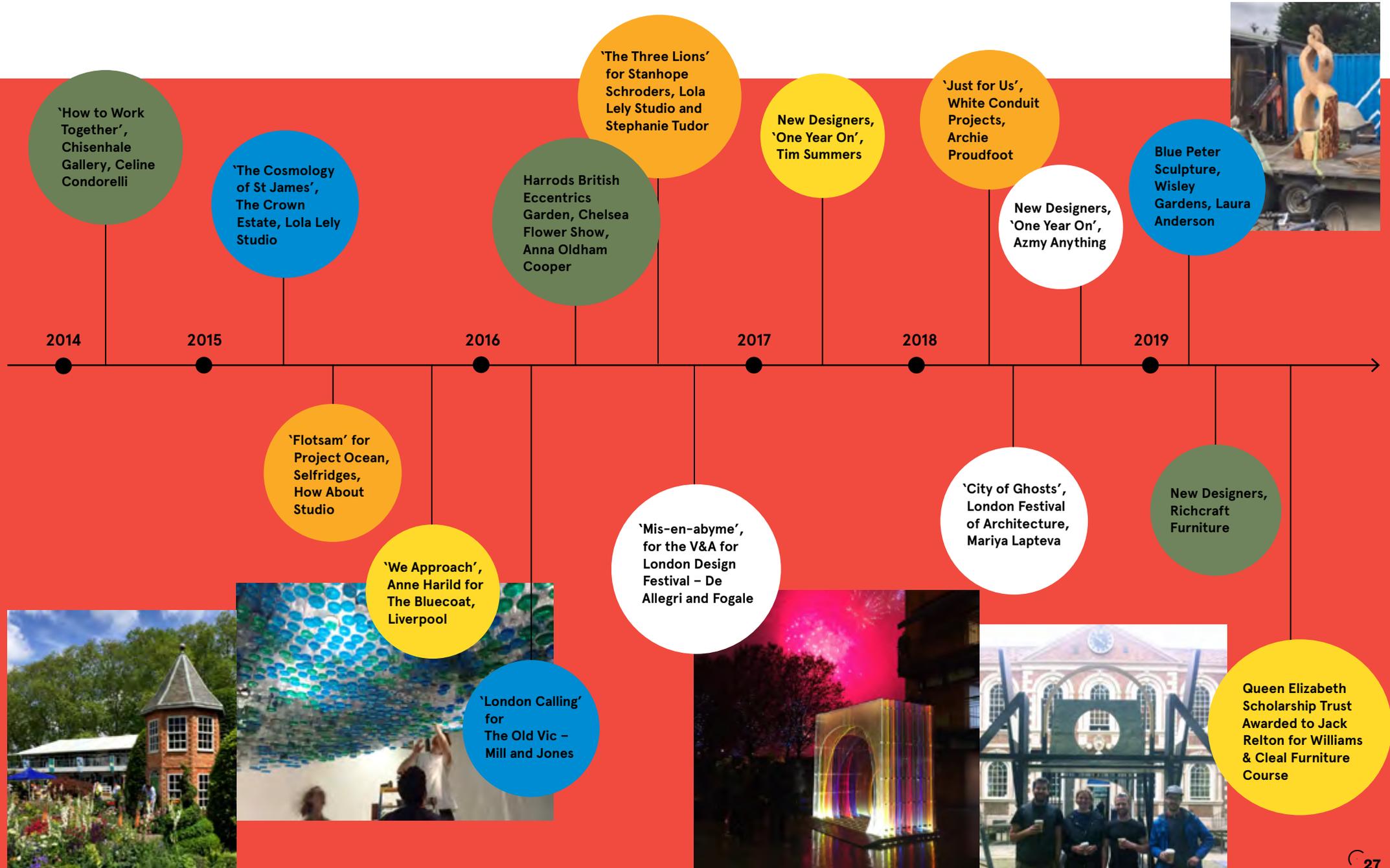




# PROGRAMME + PARTNERSHIPS



# OUR MEMBERS' KEY PROJECTS



# BRINGING THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER



Celebratory events have been key to bringing the community together beyond users of the workshop. It has always been important to ensure the space feels part of the neighbourhood, and events has been a good way to build relationships with local residents, businesses and to attract new people to the borough. Our events have ranged from food and maker markets, to hosting live music, to delivering children's activities and taking part in wider London events such as Open House London.



# **PART 2**

## **ACTIVITIES & OFFER**

- OPEN ACCESS**
- AFFORDABLE STUDIOS**
- SKILLS TRAINING**
- PROJECTS & EVENTS**
- ADVOCACY FOR MAKING**

# OPEN ACCESS TO TOOLS AND MACHINERY



Anyone can book a bench after an initial series of inductions and start using the workshop and machinery. Professionals and hobbyists work side by side, fostering a community of help and support.

A dedicated Technician is always on hand to provide extra support and 90% of users rate this as important or very important to their use of the Workshop.

“It’s a great opportunity for makers to use facilities and machinery otherwise too expensive for an individual”

Giorgio Ritucci, Studio Member

## WOODWORK MACHINERY

chop saw  
bandsaw  
pillar drill  
disc sander  
bobbin sander  
morticer  
table saw  
surface planer  
thicknesser,  
lathe

## METALWORK MACHINERY

MIG welder  
TIG welder  
plasma cutter  
chop saw  
linisher  
polisher  
pillar drill  
sheet roller  
box & pan folder  
bench shear  
metal bender  
angle grinder

## BENCHES

12 woodwork  
5 metalwork



“At Blackhorse Workshop you can escape your role as a mere spectator by getting involved in the gritty act of putting stuff together. If the Maker revolution is happening anywhere, it’s here”.

Sam Jacob, Principle of Sam Jacob Studio and founding director of FAT Architecture



“Provides an excellent space for creatives to get hands on and turn ideas into real tangible things at an affordable price without tying you into a lengthy contract.”

Stephen Biggs, Open Access Member

# AFFORDABLE STUDIOS



For designers and makers, one of the major challenges is to afford not only the space in which to make work, but the initial outlay for tools and machinery and their ongoing maintenance.

There are currently 46 businesses based at the workshop renting space that ranges from a desk in a shared studio space to converted shipping container units and self-contained studios. We offer four different types of space, suited to those at different stages of their careers – from entry level to those operating fully established businesses. All come with 24-hour access to the space, and six days a week workshop access to the wood and metalworking machinery. We provide 30 desk space units in our open plan studios, often used by recent graduates, or those working on a

part-time basis. For those starting out, affordability is key to giving people a fighting chance of establishing a successful business, and the space to make mistakes, and learn from others.

Our location with fast and easy access to central London enables makers to easily supplement their work with other jobs, and ensure they are in easy reach of their clients. The profit margins around making can be very tight, so without affordable access to space and machinery, the job becomes impossible.

For those makers who regularly work together, we have 6 self-contained

**“In just 3 years, London has lost 17% of studio spaces. A rapid increase in property values and business rates as well as changes to planning have contributed to this problem. Access to affordable studio space for artists and makers is critical to London’s creative and cultural industries.”**

Creative Land Trust

## SPACE THAT GROWS WITH CREATIVE BUSINESSES



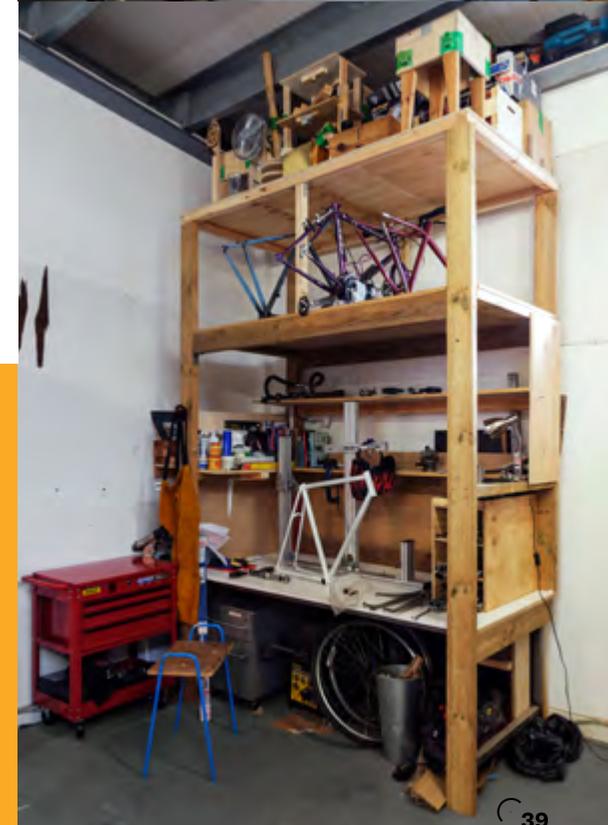


**“Blackhorse Workshop provides an affordable space for people to make a living.”**

Liam Cooke, Carpenter

studios, 3 on the ground floor, with easy access to the workshop – particularly suited to those who need additional storage. Finally, for established makers, we have 8 converted shipping containers where personal machinery might be used or for who significant material storage is required.

Through providing this mix we allow people to build up their businesses gradually, with a much lower risk than taking on loans to equip a workshop without the budget or certainty. Affordable spaces like Blackhorse Workshop are absolutely vital to the continuation of the creative industries within the city and to retaining our makers and designers.



**“Unprecedented numbers of studios are now at risk and these spaces are being lost rapidly. Studio spaces are often ecosystems in their own right supporting not just the creatives working in them but the communities around them.”**

Creative Land Trust

# SKILLS TRAINING



Since its start, the Workshop has offered a variety of skills-based courses to the public aimed at a range of abilities. Courses span from one-off evenings to six weeks alongside daytime and weekend courses. These are taught by our members, invited craftsmen, and our own technicians. For beginners the focus is to introduce wood and metalwork machinery and equipment, use of power tools and teaching different methods of working with materials.

Ultimately through teaching, the aim is to build confidence and understanding of ways of making to enable participants to develop their own projects. Masterclass sessions are also offered to more experienced makers providing the chance to refine and explore techniques such as brazing, routing or TIG welding.

# PROJECTS & EVENTS



We actively seek out ways to partner with organisations working locally or in the wider London area. Together we develop content that provides insight into the creative industries or teaches skills to enable the build of larger collective projects. Partners might be youth agencies, festival promoters, specialist educational needs (SEN) schools, pupil referral units, local council arts programming initiatives, major arts institutions or those working in interesting ways at a grassroots level.

These collaborations might result in the delivery of public making activities, outdoor pop up structures, on site courses for particular groups, teacher training, film screenings and social events for the local and maker communities.

Ultimately these projects aim to bring people together in engaging creative ways, give our members experience, paid work, support career development and provide an alternative form of educational training.

## COLLABORATORS

Abigail Conway  
 A New Direction  
 Art on the Underground  
 Battersea Arts Centre  
 Create London  
 E17 Art Trail  
 Film and Video Umbrella  
 Heals  
 London Borough of Culture  
 Ma-tt-er  
 Mayor of London  
 Rhonda Drakeford  
 Robert Penn  
 Stow Brothers  
 Stow Festival  
 Stow Film  
 The Limes  
 Waltham Forest College  
 William Morris Big Local  
 William Morris Gallery  
 Will Cruikshank  
 V&A East  
 U+I

# ADVOCACY FOR MAKING



## FILLING THE EDUCATION GAP

We are witnessing a period where the arts and making are being driven out of the education system, whilst at the same time, the creative industries continue to make a major contribution to the economy. One of our central goals is to support the growth of a creative mind set, vital to anyone working in the creative industries, through providing opportunities to explore ideas, work with materials in new ways, and understand methods of construction.

There are some concerning statistics recently published that have serious implications for the future of our creative industries economy, relating to the significant drop in the teaching of design and technology in schools.

From a 2017 report by the Association of School and College Leaders, of 668 responses, 44% said they had removed Design & Technology GCSE option.



**“There is a wealth of evidence to show that studying the arts fosters creativity, innovation, empathy, and resilience; that the arts are crucial for our economic prosperity; and that the arts enrich lives, making us happier and healthier. But children’s access to arts and culture is declining.**

Cultural Learning Alliance

To support this gap in education, we need to demonstrate the value of a making skillset for our future economy and its role in social mobility. If schools are unable to champion making due to pressures on other subjects, we have a duty to campaign for the recognition of the value of making in our society.

At Blackhorse Workshop we are a key player in this, ensuring the continued engagement and exposure of children with making through the regular delivery of subsidised workshops and activities, both in and off site.



ACTIVITIES FOR  
OVER 2,346  
CHILDREN  
AT SUMMER  
FESTIVALS



“This is a social justice issue: research shows that children with an arts deficit are disadvantaged educationally and economically while their more fortunate peers who do participate in the arts are more resilient, healthier, do better in school, are more likely to vote, to go to university, to get a job and to keep it. Participation in the arts fuels social mobility.”

Cultural Learning Alliance

# **PART 3**

# **IMPACT**

- INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPERIENCE MAKING**
- IMPROVING WELLBEING**
- INCREASING NUMBERS OF PEOPLE WORKING IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES**
- GROWING PEER AND BUSINESS NETWORKS**

# HOW OUR ACTIVITIES MAKE A DIFFERENCE

## INTRODUCTION

We have created an evaluation framework for understanding and measuring the impact we've made over the last five years. It has been formed through a process of reviewing all aspects of what we do, identifying the changes, learning and effect that happen as a result of our work.

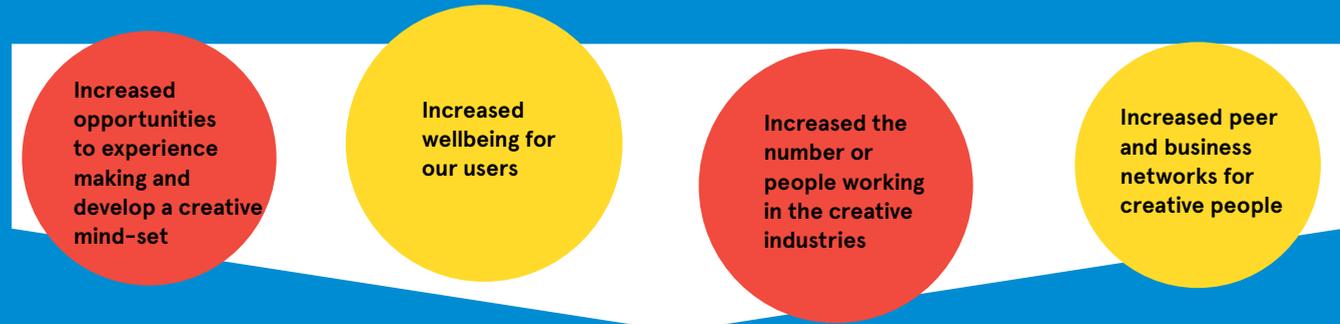
For this report we explore these activities and outcomes through presenting a mix of case studies, collected data, and the wider industry context to demonstrate the significant impact the project has had for people that have used and experienced it.

## BLACKHORSE WORKSHOP: A PUBLIC FACING CENTRE FOR CREATIVE ACTIVITY IN THE COMMUNITY

### OUR ACTIVITIES



### OUR OUTCOMES



### OUR IMPACT

**IMPROVED HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF THE LOCAL URBAN ENVIRONMENT**

# INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPERIENCE MAKING



“The creative industries, which depend on the human resources of imagination, expressivity, verbal and visual skill, are worth over £90 billion a year to the economy. But where are these resources going to come from if the rising generation of young people are unable to develop their creativity?”

Robert Hewinson, Tate Etc, Spring 2019

## HOW WE HAVE ACHIEVED THIS

We have inducted **over 2,600** people into using the workshop independently, giving people the chance to explore and develop their own self-led projects with a practical knowledge of using the machinery safely.

“Having more experienced people around to learn from is a bonus - I have picked up a lot of tips from people much more knowledgeable than myself who were also working at the workshop at the same time”

Member

**Over 3,020** adults have attended 578 workshop classes over the past 5 years. Many have found this to be their route into making, and to re-engage with their creativity. Courses offered have ranged from technique-based learning such as welding and joinery courses, to more self-directed courses such as metal fabrication, or object making including a range of furniture project from shelves, stools and tables.

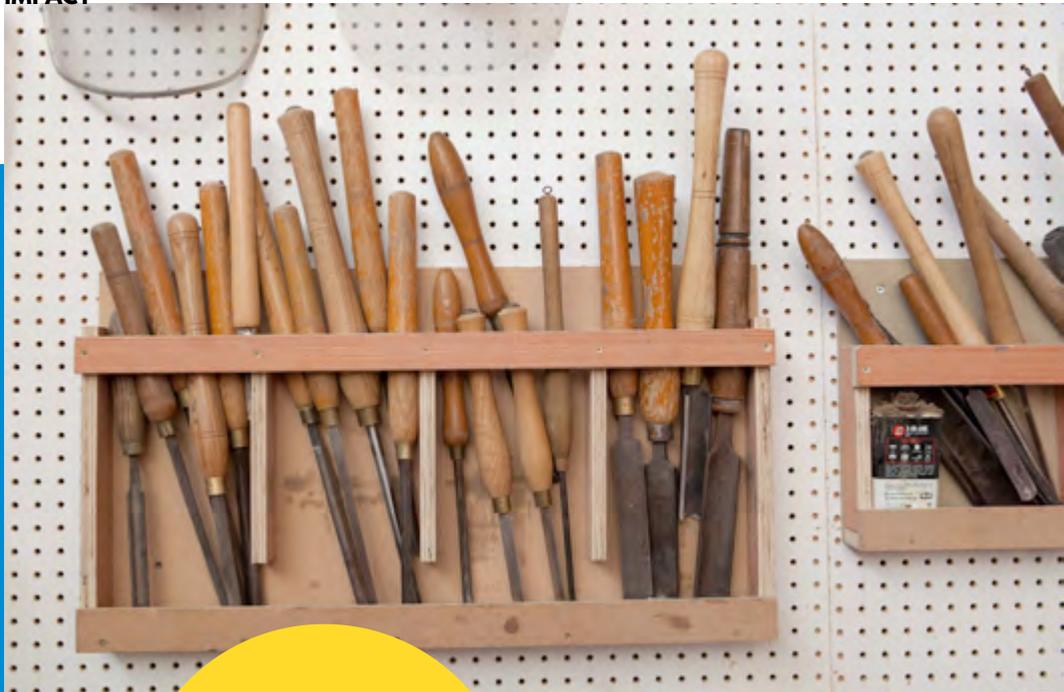
We have held **56 women-only courses** to build confidence and address the gender

imbalance in workshop settings, which have been attended by **over 360 women**. On average, **27% of those attending an induction are women**.

We have provided opportunities for **90 young people** at the workshop through tailored projects such as the *Future Mosque* designing workshop, the *Transforming Spaces* set design and our holiday *Make Stuff Club*.

Through our off-site projects, we have been able to extend the opportunities to experience making. We have delivered activities for **over 2,346 children** at summer festivals such as the *Great Get Together* in the Olympic Park, the *Useful & Beautiful* making tent at Walthamstow Garden Party, and in Leyton for our London Borough of Culture project *Atomic 50*.

We have consulted with **over 20 organisations** interested in setting up similar community makerspace models nationally and internationally, working with grassroots community organisations such as the Edinburgh Tool Library to the Wijkpaleis in Rotterdam. We have advised developers and local authorities on potential sites across London from Nine Elms to Thamesmead to explore how our model might be adapted to support other communities.



**ON OUR WOMEN ONLY COURSES**

**“I think it’s absolutely brilliant that you offer this – it’s actually how I found Blackhorse Workshop as I was looking for women’s courses – so please keep doing them! I also really appreciated having a woman teacher, I think it makes a massive difference as it can be considered such a macho space.”**

Anna Pigott, course participant

**360 WOMEN HAVE ATTENDED WOMEN-ONLY COURSES TO BUILD CONFIDENCE AND ADDRESS THE GENDER IMBALANCE IN WORKSHOP SETTINGS**



# CASE STUDY: ATOMIC50



## DEVELOPING PROJECTS WITH THE COMMUNITY

ATOMIC 50 was a theatrical making experience where actors introduced metalwork skills to children aged (7-11) and through the creative set design provided an alternative teaching environment for adult courses. Working with performance artist Abigail Conway, the project transformed a disused school building in Leyton Sports Ground into an imaginary tin metalworking factory for a month-long period in April 2019 for the first ever London Borough of Culture.

Participants became factory workers, taken on a journey into different workshop sets from different eras where they made objects from tin, exploring metalworking techniques, whilst being introduced to its material and sustainable properties through the narrative. Introducing making in this way enabled children to become more engaged with the activity allowing more freedom with their design ideas outside of their usual learning environment.

“Our classes have completely and utterly enjoyed their Atomic 50 workshops in the last two days! Everyone, kids and adults alike, have returned to school buzzing with enthusiasm and energy”

Hannah Maghee, Teacher,  
Jenny Hammond School, Leyton

37 public performances

A total of 1446 adults and children attended

10 adult specialist metalworking courses

21 performances for local schools



“It made me feel excited because I have never worked with metal before”

Pupil



# CASE STUDY: CREATIVITY WORKS



'Creativity Works: Transforming Spaces, 2018' was a collaborative programme for 15 talented young Londoners kick-starting a career in set design and build for festivals, theatre and events. It was co-designed with Create Jobs and member set designer Katie Fotis. Over an initial 4-week intensive course, participants took part in industry-focused training, covering creative concept to computer aided design, research to user testing, branding to fabrication. Paired with artist-mentors, trainees also completed a work placement designing, building and installing an interactive stage for our commissioned activity tent at Walthamstow Garden Party.

Trainees met set designers, technicians, artists and event producers, developing skills in creative thinking, responding to live briefs, design thinking, project management, presentation and engaging audiences, as well as practical construction and making.



# CASE STUDY: SIDESHOW



## CREATING PLAYFUL ENVIRONMENTS

'Sideshow' (Sept – Dec, 2017) was an offsite pop up installation, located opposite Blackhorse Road station and commissioned by property developer U+I. It was located on the former site of the Associated Equipment Company Factory, whose prototypes inspired the design of London's iconic Routemaster bus. The vision was to create a family friendly space that referenced the making heritage of the site, and that could be used as a venue to deliver events, practical making activities, and showcase members' designs from the workshop. It also housed a coffee station and bar on weekend evenings.

The Workshop teamed up with young architectural practice Ehk! to design and build a structure that was constructed by workshop members. Visitors were invited to get 'hands on' with a large interactive marble run, built from London bus components that weaved its way around the site.



The venue was also an opportunity to showcase makers' products from the workshop. Exhibitions were curated by studio member Katie Fotis including *The Sounds of Summer*, *Makers Movements* and a Christmas themed show *Makers Presents* which included playful props to help with present buying indecision. Working with local and wider London cultural partners, we hosted artist film screenings with Film & Video Umbrella, a debate with local architecture collective Matzine, a performance with dance troupe MovE17, and a music night with the Wheel Up Sound System. Public making workshops were hosted by guest designers including Rhonda Drakeford, and our own members for adults and children.



# INCREASING WELLBEING



## HOW WE HAVE ACHIEVED THIS

For many making provides a meditative alternative to staring at a computer screen, reconnecting mind and body. We facilitate a creative community through makers sharing workspace, regular member events, on-site technical support and an ethos of sharing knowledge.

Feeling part of a community combats some of the loneliness and challenges of being self-employed or a small business and leads to a greater likelihood that the creative businesses based here will flourish.

The open plan desk space encourages people to talk to each other and events like the annual birthday parties or regular pizza nights provide opportunities for members to socialise and get to know each other.

## 'CRAFT AND WELLBEING' CRAFTS COUNCIL REPORT, 2011

- "the social interaction it encourages can help combat the isolation of depression"
- "clinically proven to raise levels of mood-enhancing chemical serotonin, whilst inducing the relaxation and 'mindfulness' more often associated with meditation"
- "craft has a special and distinctive role to play in promoting wellbeing through social interaction amongst people otherwise excluded from social and community networks. Working with community organizations, local authorities and community centres, many makers offer participatory workshops for specialist groups, including disadvantaged children, older people or people with a disability and young people at risk of offending"

**"Its so exciting to see people learning with their bodies and tools instead of ubiquitous screens. I had been feeling quite depressed over the years at the way arts education cuts at all ages have meant a gradual but thorough decline in making and its associated histories and cognitive values. It's good to know that there are people like yourselves at Blackhorse Workshop who are offering valuable alternatives."**

Dr Pen Dalton, Former director of Art and Education MA, Birmingham City University



**2600 PEOPLE HAVE BEEN TRAINED TO USE TOOLS AND MACHINERY INDEPENDENTLY**

# CASE STUDY: AZMY ANYTHING



As a teenager Azmy was a keen filmmaker and was often making things, usually items that he wanted but couldn't afford, like his own steadicam from a baby carrier backpack.

He went on to study Film Production and began a career in visual effects. After an internship at VFX company Framestore, he began his career working on films like the award-winning Gravity and Harry Potter.

After seven years in the industry, Adam became ill with depression and found that his working environment was taking its toll and his focus needed to change. Time away from the screen led him to return to his teenage hobby of making, starting with pieces of furniture for his home. He found working with his hands helped clear his head. As his living room took the brunt of his handiwork it was then he was introduced to Blackhorse Workshop.

'Blackhorse was the major thing, I did the induction for that about three years ago and didn't do anything for about a year, I did a bunch of inductions in one go, it took me a while to build up the confidence to come' explains Adam, he felt initially overwhelmed by the large machines and being surrounded by more experienced people.

Eventually he started using the workshop regularly on a Saturday and found he

looked forward to his time here, extending to two days a week. It was after a year or so of working on personal projects that the Moon project began. One evening spent gazing through the telescope at the moon with his partner, Adam wondered how do you make a wooden sphere?

And so Azmy worked on creating his own lathe to make a wooden sphere: "It's a plywood lathe, powered by a sewing machine motor, with a router on an arm that arcs around the centre of the spinning piece. I also use this to make the craters once I have the sphere, by tacking on a colour coded map I made of the moon's surface using data from NASA."

And who wouldn't want their own moon? Friends began requesting commissions. Keeping one hand in VFX, he was fortunate that his current company have kept him on a retainer which enabled him to develop the design business while having a degree of security. Finding this balance means that Adam can continue to develop new ideas. Last year he featured at New Designers: One Year In, a showcase of emerging talent in design where he featured pieces in a collection called Space Between Space. Maybe also a metaphor for finding space to create and work from the noise of depression and his recent diagnosis of adult ADHD.

**"I couldn't do any of this stuff without the space, the people, and having my own little studio space here"**

Adam Azmy



# CASE STUDY: DAVID APPLEWHAITE

One of our Saturday regulars, David Applewhaite, enjoys taking time out from the 9 to 5 and coming to the workshop to unwind and get creative. David has been using the workshop for the past six months, where he has been working on an unusual and unique project inspired by the ostentatious tastes of Marie Antoinette, a luxury bed for a pampered pooch!

I found Blackhorse Workshop by an internet search. I was looking for woodworking courses that satisfied certain conditions:

1. Fit around my 9-5
2. I can work on my own projects
3. In London
4. Reasonable cost

Blackhorse fitted the bill perfectly!

I'm making pet beds, for cats & small dogs! Think Marie Antoinette – that sort of thing and you have the idea. A slightly unusual project, but it's been buzzing around inside my head ever since I saw a few of them in Vogue magazine many many moons ago. I eventually popped over to France, to see them for myself. They are very, very aristocratic. What I'm making is my 'take' on that theme, but exclusive to everyone – hee-hee.

I'm currently an IT Trainer for a large NHS Trust in central London. The Trust has just rolled out a huge IT system. This means working long days & nights supporting clinical and non-clinical staff, as they get use to their new record keeping IT system. Historically, I've been – amongst other things – a junior land surveyor and a quantity surveyor – happy days and slightly less challenging than training adults IT systems!

Blackhorse has the right community spirit and the folks here are willing to help, offer advice & support. It's also having access to machines, my own bench space and it opens on Saturdays. With safety first, the Workshop allows me to run my own madcap proof-of-concept projects, pretty much hassle free, which suits me just fine.



# INCREASING NUMBERS WORKING IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES



Jack Reiton, Metallwall, 2018

**“The creative economy is estimated to provide one in six jobs in London and the creative industries generate around £47 billion for the London economy. It is also one of London’s fastest growing sectors”**

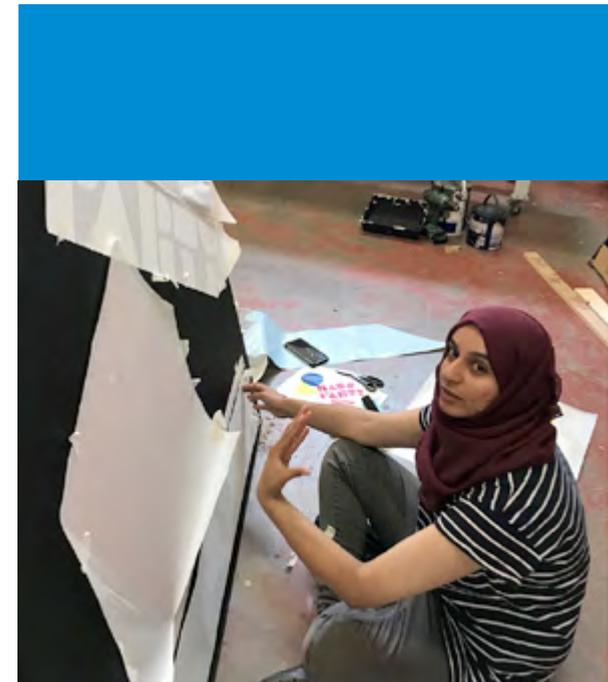
Mayor of London

## HOW WE HAVE ACHIEVED THIS

The growth in turnover of studio members since joining BHW demonstrates the impact on creative businesses and the number of people who are able to continue to work in the creative industries.

The cost of living has rapidly increased and running your own workshop is simply not an option for many makers, who cannot afford the equipment outlay or ongoing maintenance. Unless there is accessible provision made, then many will not get beyond the start-up phase, and we will lose these type of creatives within the city.

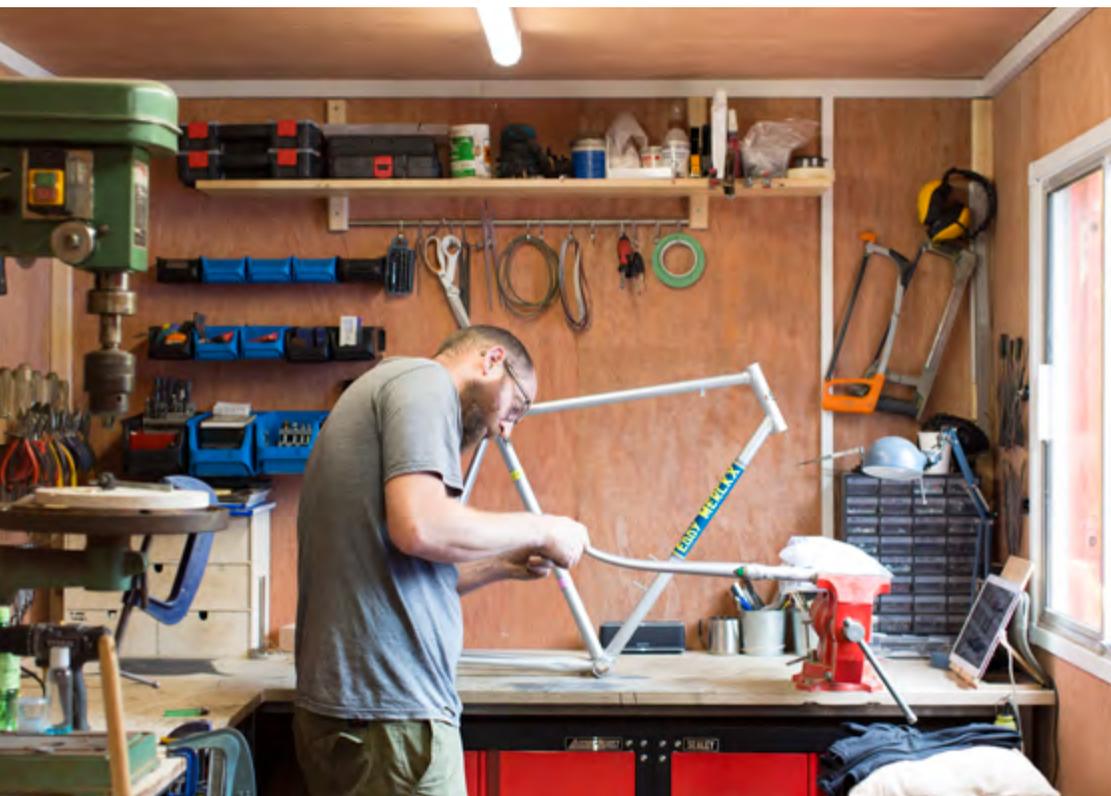
Our 46 studio spaces provide the creative freelance network that allows individual makers to connect with other skilled professionals and bring them onto projects as and when they are needed. The broad mix of disciplines that require access to the type of machinery we offer means that the range of skills can often be complimentary to others’ project needs.



**“I was unsure what direction I wanted to take, the time and space here enabled me to explore more methods of making and gave me the opportunity to think about my own business ideas, how I could run a small business or work with other makers.”**

Misbah Siddique, Studio Member

# CASE STUDY: LAPSLEY FRAMEWORKS



“As space is at a premium in London I had no chance of getting my own workshop. I had worked for the past 15 years in mount-making and museum display work and the machinery and facilities this requires would involve a huge investment and the risk would be too high to set up on my own.

I got my own studio desk on the first floor at Blackhorse and would come in on evenings and weekends with the view to making the dream of having my own business a reality. After completing my workshop inductions it became clear to me that the facilities and machinery available would cover all my requirements and without the investment I had always assumed I would need.

In 2018 after the loss of a close relative and the constant feeling of working so hard to line someone else's pocket, I thought the time would never be right to make the leap but I felt safer than ever before, with not only the facilities but the community of makers who all seemed so free with their time and support. I gave up my job and sat at my desk upstairs feeling proud that i had made the move.

One year on my business had quickly outgrown the desk space and the availability of a container felt like the stars aligning. My business is now stable and growing and still has the support of a great working community. It is fantastic to be able to grow my business within the borough in which I know and live.”

**“My business is now stable and growing and still has the support of a great working community.”**

Mick Lapsley



# GROWING PEER AND BUSINESS NETWORKS



The community element is the most important thing for the majority of studio members. In a recent survey, **26% of our members** said that they felt part of a community of makers before joining the Workshop, which increased to **87% after joining**.

The sense of community also translates into business opportunities, and **71% of our studio members** have worked on collaborative projects together. Collaboration gives those starting out the opportunity to gain experience and for businesses to grow and take on larger projects.



**“Blackhorse fosters creativity, supports in every way, creates a sense of community and allows me to work in an industry that would be impossible without the community and support of the workshop.”**

Christina French, Carpenter



# CASE STUDY: HERB PALMER FURNITURE DESIGN



**“Beyond access to information is also the access to skilled labour when needed to help fulfil a project. Being able to work with people from the same workshop means that help often comes with an added care in making sure the job is completed to its greatest potential.”**

Herb Palmer, Furniture Maker

## MEMBER COLLABORATORS: LUA GARCIA, ROSCO SIEBERS

“Starting a business immediately after leaving university was potentially a bit of a dumb move when I look back on it. There was so much I didn't know, so much that can only be learned through work experience. Being at Blackhorse Workshop was immensely vital in those early days in the way it provided me with a wealth of information from other, more experienced members and helped bridge the gap of missing work experience.

From the very basics of where to order timber/metal from and what standard sizes of raw materials are, to more complex information around tools/equipment/hardware and processes I didn't know about. After four years at Blackhorse, that kind of information never stops coming and I feel has really accelerated my business growth.”



# CASE STUDY: THE READING RETREAT



**MEMBER COLLABORATORS:  
STUDIO BERMAN (ARCHITECT),  
CHRISTINA FRENCH, LUA GARCIA  
AND TOBY POOLMAN (CARPENTERS)**

The Reading Retreat was designed to create a quiet area within the playground of local primary school Stoneydown Park for children to spend time away from the business of the external play area, to enjoy reading.

The original brief for the scheme was to enclose an open sided lean-to and build a new deck beneath the existing canopy. The design pushed this original brief further to create a raked seating area on which pupils can sit with a book, to relax and read during playtime. The space is also used for one to one reading support for young pupils aged 5 – 11 years. Working with a limited construction budget the architects and makers all based at Blackhorse Workshop worked closely together to develop a proposal that was pre-fabricated in our yard and assembled on site. Embracing low cost and readily available materials, the structure was formed with joinery grade pine and is clad with corrugated polycarbonate. The designers sought to maximise the fabricators skills in joinery.



# **PART 4**

# **FUTURE**

# WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Given the success of the last five years, it's an interesting challenge to think how best to create a stable and exciting future for the workshop and to understand the best way to do this, without sacrificing our core values and sense of community.

It has taken 5 years to set up and establish the workshop within the borough, and the grassroots that have been laid will flourish only with further commitment to working locally. We therefore plan to improve our educational and outreach offer on the current site, but look to explore a campus model, where new sites close by or across the borough can be developed to offer access to a range of different equipment and programmes.

In the current climate where DIY self-organised learning has had to become the norm (due to price hikes within higher education) we will continue to provide alternative learning opportunities on a pay-as-you go affordable model.

Over the last five years we've seen the space evolve in terms of how it's been used and by whom, as our activities have started to shape this change. Our adult courses have increased the shift from hobbyists to professional users, and our focus on women-only sessions has changed the gender balance in the space.

It's well known that there is a lack of ethnic diversity within the creative industries, and there's still lots of work to do around making sure our users are truly reflective of our location. We are committed to looking at ways to change this, working with young people to explore how to open up the space to a wider audience and introducing concessionary rates to challenge what 'affordable' really means in London.

To further support the businesses based on site, we will be identifying clearer routes to market, creating new opportunities to showcase and sell work. We will continue to improve technical facilities, bringing in new equipment and services to support the making of our members. This ambition will include expanding into key aspects of digital manufacturing, and looking at our provision of grow-on space.

We plan to continue to experiment with how we engage with our community, taking creative approaches to teaching and exploring ways to co-develop design thinking, building on our huge success with Atomic 50.



# APPENDIX

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## PROJECT LIST

2019 – *A New Direction* with Creative and Cultural Opportunities

2019 – *Atomic 50*, London Borough of Culture, Leyton Sports Ground

2019 – *Great Get Together* with V&A, Olympic Park

2018 – *Sideshow* with U+I, Forest Rd, Walthamstow

2018 – *Body Builders* for Walthamstow Garden Party

2018 – *Transforming Spaces* with A New Direction

2018 – *Future Mosques* with the Fatima Cates Academy, Walthamstow

2017 – *Heals Modern Craft Market*, Heals

2017 – *The Fun Factory* with The Limes

2017 – Walthamstow Garden Party *Useful+Beautiful* tent

2017 – Make Stuff Holiday Club with William Morris Big Local

2016 – *A Wooden Chest for the White House* with Create London

2016 – *Wooden Matters* with Ma-tt-er for London Design Festival

2015 – *Walthamstow Garden Party* (Xylophone activity)

2015 – *Makers Playground* for London Design Festival

2014 – *Walthamstow Garden Party*, (Hobby Horse activity)

## FUNDERS

Big Issue Invest  
Art Council of England  
Greater London Authority  
London Borough of Waltham Forest  
William Morris Big Local

## COLLABORATORS

Abigail Conway  
Adam Vaudin  
A New Direction  
Art on the Underground  
Battersea Arts Centre  
Create London  
E17 Art Trail  
Film and Video Umbrella  
Heals  
London Borough of Culture  
Ma-tt-er  
Mayor of London  
Open House London  
Rhonda Drakeford  
Robert Penn  
Seán and Stephen  
Stow Brothers  
Stow Festival  
Stow Film  
The Limes  
Waltham Forest College  
William Morris Gallery  
Will Cruikshank  
V&A East  
U+I

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Blackhorse Board (2014 – 2019): Carolyn Abbott, Mark Andrews, Tim Bennett-Goodman, Mark Brearley, Sarah Drinkwater, Hadrian Garrard, Nat Hunter, Odel Jeffries, Mark Kass, Matthew Leung, Maria Lisogorskaya, Justin McGuirk, Ruch Pathirana, Tessa Read

Assemble  
Counter Culture LLP  
Create London  
Europa  
Pulse Studios  
Studio Build  
Our Members and Tutors

## DESIGN

Claudia Schenk, trockenbrot

## USER QUOTES

**"Exceptionally friendly people and staff that help me to improve my skills as well as remain safe in the workshop."**

John Boreiko

**"The vibe of the place is just great. Really friendly staff."**

Sami Tuohino

**"It's inclusive, whether you're a first timer or a professional you are welcomed. Technical staff are patient when showing/rinding how to use tools."**

Andy Potter

**"Flexible, open access is amazing. It's great to have access to so many tools, knowledge and a wood store in front! It's a lovely place!"**

Niall Henn

**"Hospitality, help, vibes, it is a wonderful resource"**

Andy Turnham

**"It's a really amazing supportive environment for non-professionals."**

Aaron Reiffzall

**"Very affordable and acts as a fantastic community hub for both makers, designers and customers. The café makes a huge difference in drawing local people in, which enables members to showcase and sell their products. No other shared workshop has this."**

Bruce Saunders

**"Really welcoming supportive atmosphere regardless of your level of skill/experience. Provides an opportunity for creative people to make and do things which would otherwise be almost impossible in London."**

Marco Cunha

**"I've used wood and metal workshops and these are some of the best value facilities that I've seen in London. I love the way that you can go from nothing to being a competent welder or joiner within a few weeks, and be making reasonable quality work out of that. The inductions and training are good, and if ever I have any problems while I'm working, the staff are on hand and happy to answer any questions."**

Sam Roots

**"It offers a pretty much unrivalled facility for me to make my living, expand my technical knowledge and make friends and find work opportunities through the other users and members."**

James Kelly

**"Inspiring working environment, bringing together creative individuals and empowering them."**

Jimmy Fields