

Borderlands Rise Exhibition



Overview

From the 3rd to the 8th of March 2017, Borderlands presented the Rise Exhibition in Hamilton House, creating an opportunity for refugees and asylum seekers to take part in creative workshops and exhibit their photography and artwork. These were supported by a series of portraits and sound recordings by artist Hannah Kirmes-Daly and radio DJ Jazlyn Pinckney, allowing visitors to learn more about the daily lived experience of refugees and asylum seekers in Bristol and the importance of Borderlands Mentoring Project from those involved in the project. The exhibition and programme of events was an empowering experience, providing a platform for members of Borderlands to be seen and heard through their art and music as well as celebrate what asylum seekers and refugees have to bring to Bristol. The Exhibition is part of Borderlands Mentoring Programme and celebrated the life changing work of the partnering project which has been running since April 2016. The Mentoring Project, which is supported by the People's Projects and Big Lottery funding, partners refugees and asylum seekers with local volunteers to provides support with orientation, English language and integration in the community. The project has so far trained 89 volunteer mentors who have forged strong one-to-one relationships with Bristol based refugees and asylum seekers.



Workshops

Artwork for the exhibition was prepared during the twice weekly drop-in sessions at Borderlands. Refugees and asylum seekers participated in drawing and painting workshops, street photography and preparing audio commentary for the exhibition. The aim of the art workshops was to encourage Borderlands members to create artwork, feel proud and able and enjoy the process.

The Artists:

There were more than 12 artists whose work made up the exhibition. Here are a few of them.

Mona, Iran

“When I was young I start making art, maybe just collage or something like that. But when I was 16, I go to art school and I start art in graphic design. And fashion design at university. I study graphics in Sari in my country [Iran] and Tehran for fashion design. Some design just come to my mind, but this one is the girl in the prison.”

Yousef, Sudan

“Before in Sudan I had a good life, with family and friends. But after, in my country—a problem with the government. On the left you see many animals in the hills. On the right they are gone—because of bombs. Before the mountains were green, after they are black. In the top right you see government planes and the army fighting with people, beneath are young people like me with no guns, but fight.”



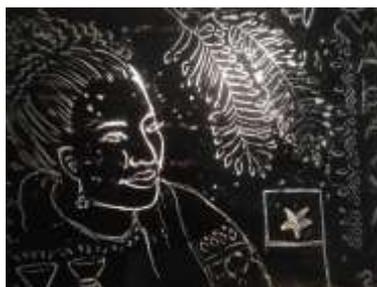
Habib, Bangladesh



“Farmer family. Somebody working in the field. They are all day working. After they hungry and need food. This lady go to the field, take water. This is hard life. I do hard work, I can earn money. I’m happy. Suspension bridge Clifton. I go too many times. I like this place, that’s why I draw it. I live in Bristol. I like Bristol.,”



Bushra and Mandeeg, Somalia



Mandeeg, member mentored by Bushra: The first time I came to Borderlands to meet my mentor, I thought it would be nice, because I would meet nice people. The way I feel right now, I feel like she [Bushra] is my sister. Always she ask me if I need something I am here for you. I always ask myself like why I didn’t meet her a long time ago. Sometimes I tell myself this is the right time to meet her. She is a nice person and open person and always happy and laughing. She an amazing women and I am so happy to have met her.”

Bushra, Volunteer Mentor “I never thought I would meet another Somalian person whose has fled war and come here and is in a similar situation to me herself and has had the same experiences.... We are both relating to our own experiences, but at the same time it wouldn’t have happened if it wasn’t for Borderlands...This opportunity has provided me to have some sort of, I know this sounds really weird, but some sort of closure. Because for a long time I have not been in a position where I have been able to talk to people who have had a similar experience to myself. So I think that provided me with some sort of healing for myself because you know, I remember the war, I remember everything what happened, when it happened. I remember everything. And those images are quite traumatic. It will stay with me for the rest of my life”.



The Launch

The launch of the Rise Exhibition was held on Friday the 3rd of March, opened by the Mayor of Bristol Marvin Rees. The exhibition ran for a week, and welcomed both Borderlands members and the general public, to celebrate the work and reflect on the personal stories behind migration.



The Music Night

Borderlands Music Night was a celebration of food, music and dance from around the world.

Esam, from Kurdistan, cooked delicious food for over 200 people alongside salads and side dishes brought by Borderlands members, volunteers, and the general public.



The Music Group (based at Hamilton House), made up of refugees and asylum seekers in Bristol, performed a variety of dance and music from the Balkans to Iran, Kurdistan to Sudan. Nabra, an oud playing duo also performed.



For links to music videos of performances see: https://video-lht6-1.xx.fbcdn.net/v/t42.1790-2/17150669_1882723362012884_4471912771704848384_n.mp4?efg=eyJybjHliOjMwMwMCwicmxhjo2

