

# RISING IMPACT REPORT



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Impact Reporting 2019-20

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We are Rising Arts Agency, a micro-agency based in Bristol that exists to support and advocate for the wants and needs of young people. Led by young creative thinkers, we advocate for sector and cultural change through campaigns, research projects, industry consultation and our creative agency services. Since we were founded by Kamina Walton in 2016 we've grown, changed and adapted to create impact on an even bigger scale.

[www.rising.org.uk](http://www.rising.org.uk) / [hello@rising.org.uk](mailto:hello@rising.org.uk)

"I absolutely know my voice is worth sharing, but in practise I struggle to feel fully confident being heard. Rising has been the safe, nurturing space to experiment - that's supported me to raise my voice louder for the silenced, loud enough to reach a wider audience."

*– Ella Trudgeon, Rising Artist & BE IT Cohort 1*



# WE CHALLENGED

26 talks given

Rising's work is vitally important to the future of the creative sector, but also to the future as a whole.

Young people deserve to be listened to and empowered NOW so we can build a more equitable future for everyone.

#### **Social Change**

The UK is the 5th most unequal country for income distribution. We're a Real Living Wage employer and fight for decent pay for all young people.

#### **Creative Sector**

The sector remains predominantly white (88.8%) and upper-middle class (33%) despite moves to change. Our team and board demonstrate that change is achievable.

#### **Entrepreneurship**

We are a social enterprise because we believe that to be truly radical we need to generate our own independent income.

#### **Resilience**

Young people have been through a lot. Creativity offers an outlet for expression that can support mental wellbeing and is integral to leadership.



"Final plenary at national cultural sector network conference from Rising Arts Agency and my 29-year-old self is loving how genuine their youth participation and representation is."

– Dana Kohava Segal,  
Fundraiser



# ONBOARD

Our entire board is under 30

Through OnBoard, we support organisations to centre the opinions, insights and expertise of young people in their governance structures. This is part of our extended consultancy offer.

Following our hugely successful pilot in 2018/19, we recruited four more young people this year to join the boards of organisations across the region. We provided intensive training and support for everyone—including our own young board.

Our OnBoard cohort now comprises sixteen young people and nine cultural sector organisations and agencies, with the programme going from strength to strength. We are also now part of Clore's Cultural Governance Alliance.

Before the launch of this year's programme, we held a meeting between our Youth Board and Advisory Board to discuss the best way forward for the agency.

It was clear that the Youth Board was making most of our strategic decisions and so it was agreed they would step up to become Rising's new Board. Existing Advisory Board members became Expert Friends and continue to support our work.

Rising is now genuinely youth-led from Non-Executive Director level, through our Board, and to our staff team, of which only our Director is currently over 30.

"Diverse City already had a young trustee, but we didn't have the resources to support him properly. We now feel much more confident that our young trustee is supported and part of a wider network."

– *Becky Chapman, Diverse City*



# WHOSE CULTURE?

55 survey responses

Whose Culture launched in 2018. That was the year of groundwork, conversations and network-building. 2019/20 was the year of scaling up, taking action and making noise.

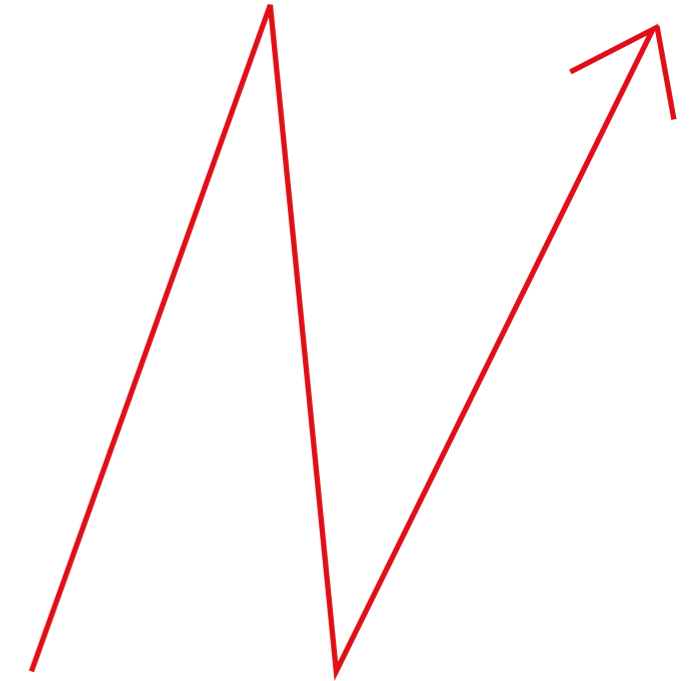


We brought young people together to connect, make, and have conversations about creativity, culture, identity and belonging—on their terms. We created online surveys, sparked conversation, and took to social media to campaign. We took over gallery space and exhibited work (see 'Why Are We Not Here' on page 11). The filmic, photographic and online campaign We Are Here amplified the voices of young creatives of colour on their own terms and in their own words.

Over the last two years, Whose Culture has grown into a digital space that fosters a sense of identity, collective understanding and support. We are regularly approached by creatives and networks to cross-promote content, and we have a big following amongst London creatives of colour, demonstrating the breadth of the work's appeal.

"We are tired of feeling like an 'add-on' to fill a diversity quota, tired of feeling like the only contribution we can make to an event or exhibition centres around our difference."

– *Whose Culture Participant*



# BE IT: CREATIVE CHANGE-MAKER PROGRAMME

In August we found out our bid for the Arts Council's Transforming Leadership programme had been successful.



£215K funding awarded

The bid had been shaped by our community in a creative 'lab' in March and proposed a truly radical approach to leadership.

With funding of £215k over five years, it's the biggest programme Rising has ever run. It embodies our core belief that young people are ready to be leaders NOW, not just in the future. It holds reflection and care at its heart, giving the cohort the ability to challenge the sector and look after themselves.

We recruited two dynamic Co-Producers, Roseanna Dias and Will Taylor, and ten young people from our existing community to become the Year 1 cohort. We are partnering with Bristol City Council's Culture Team and the Mayor's Office to ensure real change is embedded at a strategic level.

"We, the young people of Rising, believe we have the knowledge and insight to be leaders NOW, not just in the future, with the potential to radically shift our cities and creative industries towards true cooperation and inclusion."

*ACE Transforming Leadership Bid 2019*



# BECOME IT

58 participants

At the end of 2019, we were successfully funded by the Van Neste Foundation to create a four-tier support programme for young creatives in Bristol.



“Because Rising shares the exact same ideals as me, to give anyone who’s interested a look into the sort of progress I’m vying for I would recommend these events as one of the best sources.”

– Workshop Participant

Kicking off at the dawn of 2020, we now run regular training opportunities, match mentors, facilitate networking, and fund micro-commissions. It’s the first time our mentoring and support work has been properly funded and has allowed us to create a holistic programme for a whole new audience of young people starting their creative journey.

From March, responding to COVID-19 restrictions, we repurposed large chunks of the funding (set aside for in-person costs). In doing so, we extended the planned six-month pilot to be year-long, moving online and keeping costs low. We’re now seeking ways to fund it permanently.

# COMMISSIONS

£25.3K earned

## Under My Skin

Under My Skin was a collaboration between Spike Island, Rising Arts Agency and Integrate UK in response to artist Imran Perretta’s exhibition ‘the destructors’. Eleven young people from Bristol were invited to take part in a series of conversations and film-focused workshops, exploring the themes of identity and marginalisation present in the exhibition. Participants were provided with the opportunity to create a series of short films to be presented in the gallery space at Spike Island.



“It was great! [...] I expected a good film however it surpassed all my expectations.”

– Under My Skin Participant

## Why Are We Not Here?

In May 2019, Test Space hosted Rising’s exhibition, ‘Why Are We Not Here?’, as part of Spike Island Open Studios. The exhibition, curated by Rising artists Anika Deb and Stacey Olika, featured the work of eight talented artists of colour from Rising’s community. Their work directly addressed the question ‘Why Are We Not Here?’ as artists of colour in a mainstream institution. The collective also programmed a series of companion events, including meetups and panel discussions.

It was one of the most popular exhibits of the weekend and garnered a swarm of press attention highlighting institutional racism and how important this challenge is to the sector.





# THE STATS

2019/20 was a year of growth for us in the way we work with our community.

In response to the increasing need for bespoke 1:1 attention, we adapted our methods to provide carefully curated, comprehensive support to a smaller, well-held cohort of young people — with fantastic results.

**£212K**

- 19% income independently earned
- 81% grants

**19**

into paid arts roles

**96**

young people worked with directly

**27**

partners collaborated with

**£22.9K**

paid directly to young creatives  
90% of all commissions

**39**

paid opportunities

# WE GREW

Team grew by 170% in 8 months



## The Team

We dedicated a lot of time this year to organisational development.

As our team and impact have grown and we look at what's to come, it has been crucial to ensure we are working from solid foundations.

To get the most from our work, our team—and our community—need to be well-rested, well-equipped, and well-supported. Securing this meant establishing and growing our formal systems, policies and procedures. Basically, we grew up a bit.

We want to set an example for how a radically, genuinely youth-led, inclusive organisation can be run. To us, that means developing accessible policies that others can use and streamlining processes so we can do more of the things that matter.

## Rebrand

To level-up our professionalism, we needed a defined brand. So, we worked with design agency PATWA and funding from the School for Social Entrepreneurs to create a brand that was “gently anti-establishment” and “agile” but also gave us the weight we needed for our growing audience.

Enter, our new logo: part frame, part speech bubble, all Rising. With bold colours and text reminiscent of Anthony Burrill, we're ready to take on the world with a strong graphic identity.

# RE/IMAGINE LIBRARIES

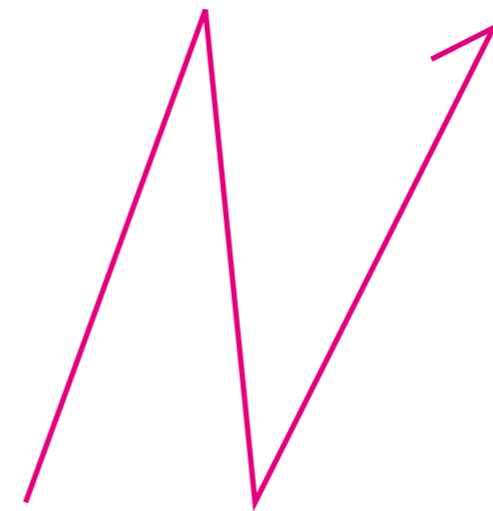
64 survey responses

**RE/IMAGINE was commissioned as a follow-up to a citywide council-led consultation on the future of libraries.**

Running between March and July 2019, RE/IMAGINE was a collaborative pilot between Rising Arts Agency and the Bristol City Council Arts Development Team and Libraries Service.

It offered an exploration into models of youth engagement and the potential for public spaces to become more welcoming and functional for young people aged 16–24 across the city.

The pilot culminated with two events, in Junction 3 and Southmead libraries, where young people took over the space, performed, danced, ate and hung out. A comprehensive report was produced which inspired a piece of deeper follow-on work with Junction 3 that Rising will deliver in 2020–22.



**“One of the things from the events which stuck out to me the most, was when Euella split the room into those who had been to a library in the past 3 months and those who hadn’t. The majority of the room were on the side of those who hadn’t.”**

*Issie Tovey – Re/Imagine Participant*

# WE CARED



At Rising, things can move so fast that we forget to reflect, slow down and care for ourselves as much as we do for our community.

In 2019/20 this became a real priority, especially when the world went into lockdown in March.

With the increase of our team size from four people to seven in a matter of months, space and capacity had already been on our minds. (As we grew, so did our capacity and the pace of our work—even though we all remained part-time!)

Rising has been—and always will be—agile and innovative in a crisis. At the onset of the pandemic, we moved our programmes and work patterns online, did away with timesheets, and created space to give ourselves a break (screen and otherwise).

*“We have always existed in the chaos so this isn’t new for us. Other people are just catching up.”*

*– Euella Jackson,  
Rising’s Engagement  
Producer*

## Coaching

As these things sometimes do, these changes coincided with our team training in coaching and Action Learning Skills. Emma Haughton from Relational Dynamics delivered our second session online, and it really affirmed the importance of integrating coaching approaches in everything we do. We can now offer our artists coaching conversations, whilst supporting each other to grow in different ways.

# WE CELEBRATED

2019/20 was a year with a lot to celebrate! As well as attending a few award ceremonies (see p.20) we also threw a few parties of our own.



## Shut it Down

For our third birthday in June, we staged a public art intervention on College Green. Armed with materials, food and good vibes, we made banners about causes we care about.

## Christmas Party

Our new space was the perfect backdrop to get a whole bunch of our favourite people together to celebrate an epic year, with a bigger team than ever and so many new community members!

## BE IT Launch

Inviting the world to meet our incredible cohort of 10 young leaders back in February with speeches from Kamina Walton, Stacey Olika and Lawrence Hoo as well as poetry from Malizah.



# THE ACCOLADES

2019/20 was an award winning year:



**Winner**

Young Community Leader Award 2019



**Finalist**

For Community Organisation Award for Age 2019



**Finalist**

For Data Sparkie Award TechSpark 2019



Natwest's Social enterprise 100 Top 25 trailblazing newcomer 2020

# THE FUTURE

Income grown by 100% in four years



2019/20 was a big year and 2020/21 already looks like an even bigger one.

As organisations adapt to COVID-19 and tackle their institutional bias, our work has never been more valued, or more necessary.

Year 2 of BE IT will bring a second cohort ready to step into their roles as the creative leaders they can and will be—all supported by the graduates of Year 1, now equipped with increased confidence, skills and experience.

Become It will continue to engage and empower Bristol's young artists to build creative careers on their terms.

We'll also be looking for more national and international platforms to disrupt, interrogate and make space for young people to influence strategic decision-making.

## Leadership Transition

Since Rising was founded by Kamina Walton in 2016 her plan has always been to transition the Directorship to young people after 5 years.

From September 2019 we'll begin this period of change to embed existing team members Euella Jackson and Jess Bunyan as new Co-Directors. As we grow in power and reputation, this will see us become entirely youth-led.



# SUPPORT US

More work still needs to be done...

If you want to support our work through monthly individual giving, join the [Rising Alliance](#).

[www.rising.org.uk/support-us/](http://www.rising.org.uk/support-us/)

For sponsorship, get in touch with [jess@rising.org.uk](mailto:jess@rising.org.uk)

If you want to find out more about OnBoard, get in touch with [euella@rising.org.uk](mailto:euella@rising.org.uk)

**For more information:**  
[www.rising.org.uk](http://www.rising.org.uk)

**Stay connected:**

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# GENUINELY YOUTH LED

86% staff under 30

100% of our Board  
& Non-Exec  
Directors under 25