

#ARTS4FUTURE

The story behind the Rising Arts Agency campaign that took Bristol by storm



Rising Arts Agency
c/o Studio 77
Spike Island
133 Cumberland Road
Bristol, BS1 6UX

August 2020

"#WhoseFuture is a reflection of what happens when we come together, each with our own unique voice and a powerful message to share. This is OUR future. It is ours to be disruptive, to claim spaces as ours. To be so political that the whole landscape across all industries are forced to take action."

Emma Blake Morsi, Artist and Rising Non-Exec Director

"This campaign is a wake up call to how capitalism infiltrates parts of our city more than others. Why are there no billboard sites up in Clifton? Why has it taken COVID-19, BLM and an economic melt-down to replace ad space with art?"

Rosa ter Kuile, #WhoseFuture Campaign Manager

"Images depicting Black joy and love are so far and few between in the media and popular culture, it is even seen by many in the community as a revolutionary act in itself. Through love and strength we create power from pain"

Parys Gardener, Artist

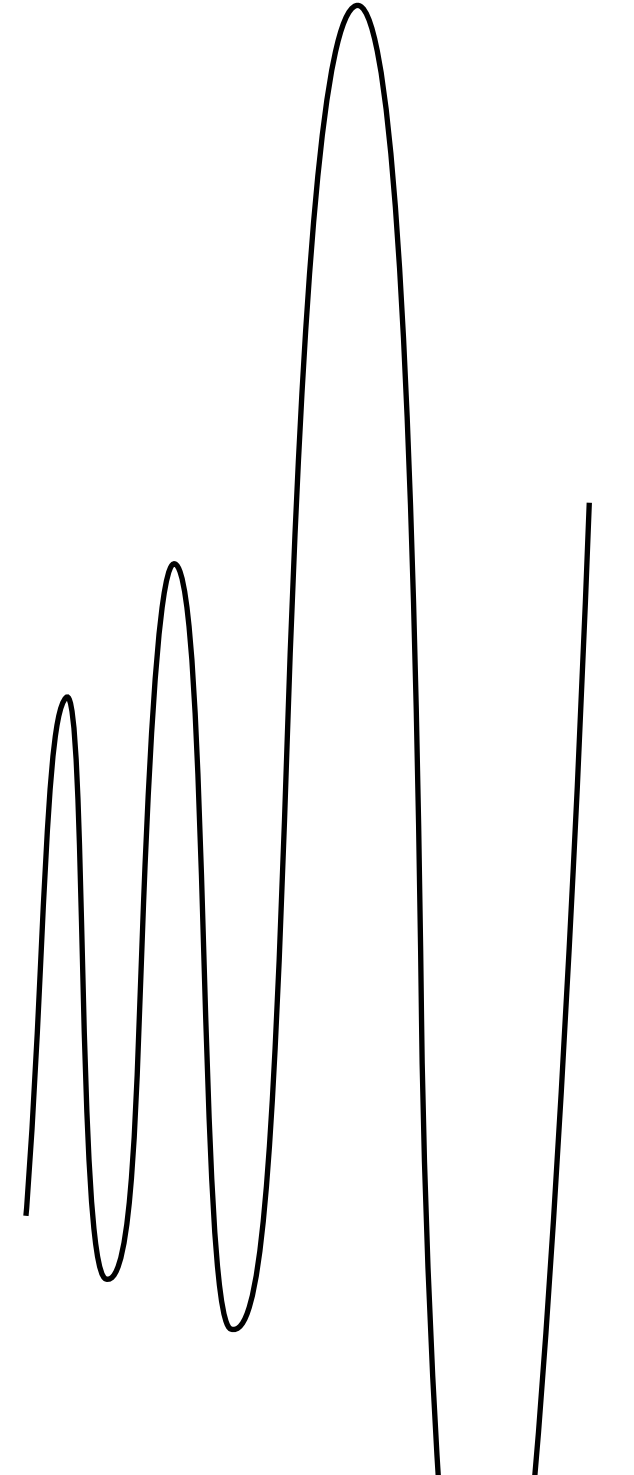
"#WhoseFuture is a powerful statement to the city. In order for us to move forward, it is important for us to listen to all the voices in the community – including Bristol's young people. This campaign is a testament to the insight that our young people have and the power they can bring to city wide conversations."

Councillor Asher Craig, Bristol City Council



**WE ARE
YOUNG,
CREATIVE,
INCLUSIVE,
RADICAL,
ADAPTABLE,
PROVOCATIVE.**

WE ARE RISING.





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RISING ARTS AGENCY IS A SOCIAL ENTERPRISE RUN BY YOUNG CREATIVE THINKERS IN BRISTOL.

We are a powerful, collaborative community of artists and creatives mobilising for social change. Our community is made up of artists, activists, producers, facilitators, illustrators, photographers, filmmakers, and more. Our mission is to empower Bristol's underrepresented young people to fulfil their creative ambitions and to affect wider social change through the arts. The agency is gently anti-establishment, co-created with and for young people, and fiercely independent.



Our artists, aged 16 - 30, are a community rather than a service user-base, and are embedded in strategic decision making at every level of our work. We support them through a successful mentoring programme, professional development and leadership opportunities to achieve their ambitions.

We're a genuinely youth led agency. Our entire Board and both Non-Executive Directors are under 27 and our Founder/Director is the only team member over 29. By September 2021 we are looking to transition our Directorship to two young team members who started as part of Rising's extended network. We advocate for young people at every level of decision making, starting right here.

Kamina Walton - Founder/Director
Euella Jackson - Engagement Producer
Eli Lower - Creative Practice Coordinator
Jess Bunyan - Development Manager
Rosa ter Kuile - Campaign Manager
Will Taylor - Be It Creative Producer
Roseanna Dias - Be It Executive Producer

WE ARE STRONGEST WHEN WE STAND TOGETHER

#WhoseFuture

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It's May 2020 and we're experiencing extraordinary and challenging times in lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic. For the creative sector the impact has been devastating. Buildings have been closed, staff furloughed, live performance and gallery-based shows cancelled, along with all live music events and festivals. Rising, being a small and agile team with no building, adapts quickly and we successfully move most of our work online. Then we get a call asking if we would be interested in pulling together a huge, public facing campaign celebrating culture in the city – with just over four weeks to make it happen.

Initially we thought this was impossible, given the timeframe and the scale. Then George Floyd was murdered in the States and the following week the Colston statue was toppled in Bristol. This was no longer an opportunity we could turn down - #WhoseFuture was our response.



#WhoseFuture gave these young artists and creatives the space to address some of the specific issues we have been grappling with head on through our work.

Above: Even at the #WhoseFuture launch, the campaign was already putting white men in uncomfortable positions.

Rising has always dreamt of taking up space in the city, shouting loud and proud for what we believe in, and the #WhoseFuture campaign has allowed us to realise that dream. Increasingly our work has focused on both championing a range of social issues and challenging the status quo in the creative sector. We used this campaign as a vehicle for showcasing young people's outstanding creative work. At the same time we amplified their voices across the city, inviting the public to pay attention to what they have to say.

#WhoseFuture gave these young artists and creatives the space to address some of the specific issues we have been grappling with head on through our work. These include racism, access issues, the climate crisis, leadership and young people's hopes for a secure and empowering future.

Through a brilliant partnership with Out of Hand and full support from Bristol City Council the campaign enabled us to take over nine billboards and 370 posters sites around the city centre for a full month over the summer of 2020.

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THE ARTISTS

We pride ourselves on celebrating the wealth of talent represented in the diverse group of young artists we work with. Many of them have been involved since we launched the agency in 2016. Many of the campaign artists highlighted below make up the core of our community.



From left to right:
 Rediat Abayneh, Shamil Ahmed, Manu Akure, Ozzy Algar, Owain Astles, Alfie Dwyer, Malizah, Maya Gamble, Parys Gardener, Henry Garrett, Soloman O-B / Khali Ackford / Joshua James Saunders, Nick Ogr, Stacey Olike, Olumide Osinoiki, Yasmin Qureshi, Jasmine Thompson, Bryony Throup, Ella Trudgeon, Amber-Ruth Watson, Courtenay Welcome, Leeza Awojobi, Olamiposi Ayorinde, Emma Blake Morsi, Cai Burton, Kiara Corales, Josephine Gyasi, Asmaa Jama, Greg Keen, Tim Lo Lytc, Rema Mukena, Anna Rathbone, Fatima Safana, Ade Sowemimo, Brook Tate, RTiiiKA, Seph Group

Black Lives Matter - that is a fact and it's not up for discussion.

Our mission has always been to champion the unheard voices of creative young people and to fight for a fairer society. When we put a call-out to our community to respond to the #WhoseFuture provocation, the lives and futures of black people came to the fore.

We will not let fear of getting it wrong stand in the way of speaking out against systematic, structural and blatant injustice against black people. As long as Rising exists, we will use our platform to fight, amplify and advocate for the voices and lives of our black friends, family, peers and community members.

BLACK LIVES MATTER



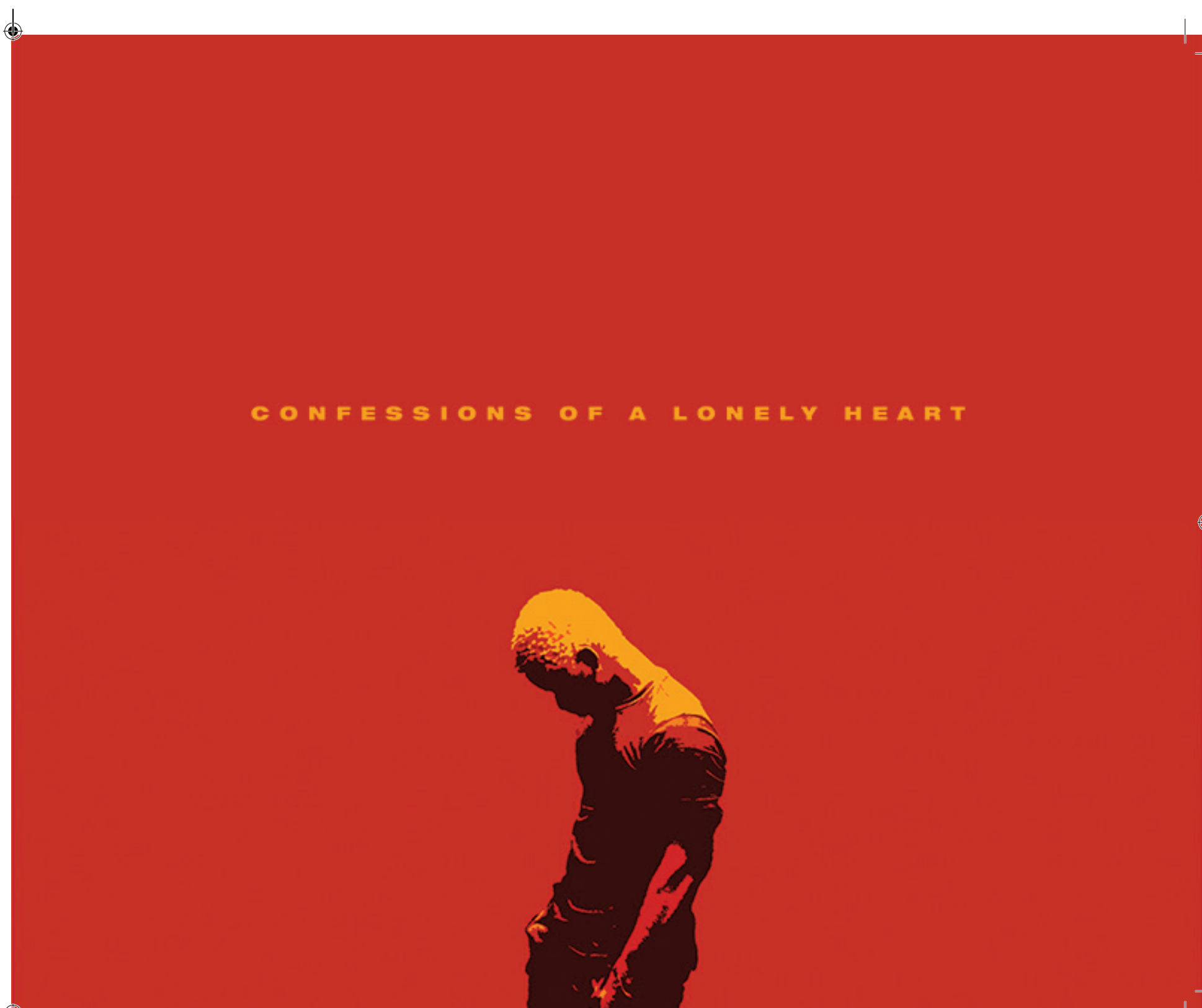


Artwork by Parys Gardener (pictured opposite)
Through love and strength we create power from pain



Above: Will Taylor, Rising's Creative Producer,
at the campaign launch

Opposite: Artwork by Manu Akure
*Falsely accused, assaulted, discriminated
against...Don't forget them*



**BLACK
TRANS
LIVES
MATTER**

#WhoseFuture

#WhoseFuture

#ConnectThroughCulture

**WE MATTERED
THEN
WE MATTER
NOW
WE MATTER
ALWAYS**

#WhoseFuture #ConnectThroughCulture

**OUR
LIBERATION IS
BOUND
TOGETHER**

#WhoseFuture #ConnectThroughCulture

**LISTEN LISTEN LISTEN
LISTEN LISTEN LISTEN
LISTEN LISTEN LISTEN
LISTEN LISTEN LISTEN
LISTEN LISTEN LISTEN
LISTEN LISTEN LISTEN
LISTEN LISTEN LISTEN**

#WhoseFuture

**ACTIONS
OVER
APOLOGIES.**

#WhoseFuture

**NO, WHERE ARE YOU
REALLY FROM?
DON'T LET THE
WRONG WORDS
FUEL OPPRESSION.
EDUCATE & THINK
BEFORE YOU SPEAK.**

Check your privilege.
@_mayabluu #WhoseFuture

**WE ARE
ALL CHILDREN
OF THE
UNIVERSE**

#WhoseFuture #ConnectThroughCulture

Ethnic minorities in Bristol experience greater disadvantage than in England and Wales as a whole in education and employment and this is particularly so for Black African people.

Black African young people are persistently disadvantaged in education compared to their White peers.

Addressing educational inequalities requires attention to the unrepresentativeness of the curriculum, lack of diversity in teaching staff and school leadership and poor engagement with parents.

Almost all ethnic minority groups in Bristol experience employment inequality when compared to White British people.





Above: Jasmine Thompson in front of her artwork
Poetic justice for a life of vice
Above left: Detail from "NOT a MOMENT but a MOVEMENT"
Opposite: Artwork by Solomon O-B, Khali Ackford,
Joshua James Saunders.
NOT a MOMENT but a MOVEMENT





Left: Artists at the #WhoseFuture press launch
Right: Artwork by Courtenay Welcome.
THOUGHTS OF DECOLONISATION



When we see us
We see unity
Community
Over knives in backs
And self attack
We see collective power.
Ancient knowledge
Collect the powers
No more evil intent
set to collect
Ours
but rather a mindset to
Represent and protect ours.

WE SEE US
@malizahofficial #WhoseFuture



Left: Extract from the 'WE SEE US' poem by Malizah (pictured right)





ACTIONS
OVER
APOLOGIES

BLACK LIVES MATTER
BLACK LIVES MATTER
BLACK LIVES MATTER

global
Montpelier Station
MONTPELIER CENTRAL
BUSINESS PARK

STATION RD. B96



Above: Extract from 'WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS' a poem by Josephine Gyasi (pictured)
Opposite left: Poem by Malizah
Opposite right: Artwork by Olumide Osinoiki
Whose identity matters?





BLACK LIVES MATTER

Left: Leeza Awojobi with her poem
For many of us, racism was in the playground
Right: Poem 'That Day at Primrose Hill' by
 Leeza Awojobi

At that moment, I became a cockroach,
 Tears spewed from my antennae and I scuttled away
 across the wood chips like an insect.
 They couldn't protect me from the reality of evil,
 They couldn't absorb the shock of heavy words spewed
 with such conviction.

At first, my mum didn't believe an adult had said these
 things to me,
 but my crying and tugging at her arm tugged at her in-
 stincts that something wasn't right.
 I remember her shouting at him- and that was the first
 time I heard the word 'racist'.

20 years later, I reflect on this experience.
 I still see his outline- huge and sturdy,
 I wonder where he is, and what kind of life he has lived.

I wonder whether he ever had any children, whether he
 ever had a little girl like me.

I'd like to just have a chat with him, and say 'Look here,
 look at me.
 I am that little girl, but now I can speak, and I have some-
 thing to say:

Aeons ago, my coarse hair and brown skin were
 dreamed up in the mind of God,
 And I am not an accident, and I am not sub-human.

For many of us, racism was in the playground.
 Leeza Awojobi @leezawojobi

At that moment, I became a cockroach,
 Tears spewed from my antennae and I
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 an insect.
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 'Look here, look at me.
 I am that little girl, but now I can speak, and
 I have something to say:

Aeons ago, my coarse hair and brown skin
 were dreamed up in the mind of God,
 And I am not an accident, and I am not
 sub-human.



Above: Artwork by Ade Sowemimo
How do I always match the description?
Left: Stacey Olika and Olamiposi Ayorinde in front of their artworks



Left: Kiara Corales in front of her poem 'In pursuit of decolonial thought and perspective'
Opposite: Artwork by Rediat Abayneh
Mourning together



Above: Artwork by Seph Group
Opposite: Artwork by Greg Keen, pictured on Church Road, St George, Bristol
Check your privilege. Educate yourself. Be an ally

BLACK LIVES MATTER





Above: RTiika with her artwork
Here to unravel, reflect and rebuild
Left: Artwork by RTiika

can I just take a moment to say

Your rising who's future campaign is

UNREAL

HOLY SHIT

I cannot enjoy it enough, I'm so excited to see it in the flesh when I get back to bristol

I've already bought the book and two posters

Above: Campaign hype

Opposite: Nigel Muntz from Out of Hand pasting up campaign images





Left: Artwork by Stacey Olike
The right side of history
Right: Artists at the launch event



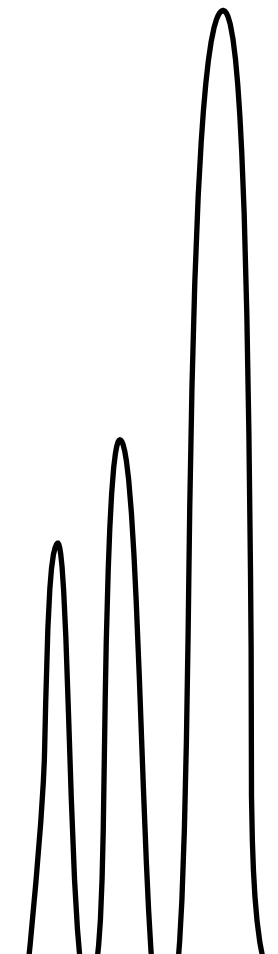


Above: Rema Mukena in front of her artwork
Left: Artwork by Rema Mukena
We're shaking the table



“#WhoseFuture was a chance for us to push for action around our collective futures and centre ourselves in shaping what that could look like.”

Euella Jackson, Rising’s Engagement Producer (pictured left)





Opposite: Artwork by Emma Blake Morsi
We mattered then, we matter now, we matter always
Above left: Emma Blake Morsi pictured with her artwork
Above right: Maya Gamble pictured with her statement



Left: Billboard alongside the M32, Bristol. Statement by Asmaa Jama
Right: Campaign posters along Lower Ashley Road, St Pauls, Bristol







Above: Nick Ogri pictured with his artwork
Opposite: Artwork by Nick Ogri
Support Mothers, Celebrate Women



Left: Artwork by Tim Lo
Who do you see? Why?
Opposite: Artwork by Olamiposi Ayorinde
My diversity is here to share






Above: (left to right) Euella Jackson, Josephine Gyasi, Stacey Olike, Parys Gardener, Rema Mukena pictured in front of their photograph. Artwork photography by Alexie Segal
Opposite: Campaign launch



ACCESS & WELLBEING

Neither 'wellbeing' nor 'access' should be the sole responsibility of the individual. For either to be achieved, we need unconditional collective action. Wellbeing isn't just a bath and a green tea. Access isn't just an automatic door with a ramp. They are universal basic income. They are a well-funded, free-forever National Health Service. They are the full, joyous celebration of whole, undiluted selves. Take all of us, or get left behind.



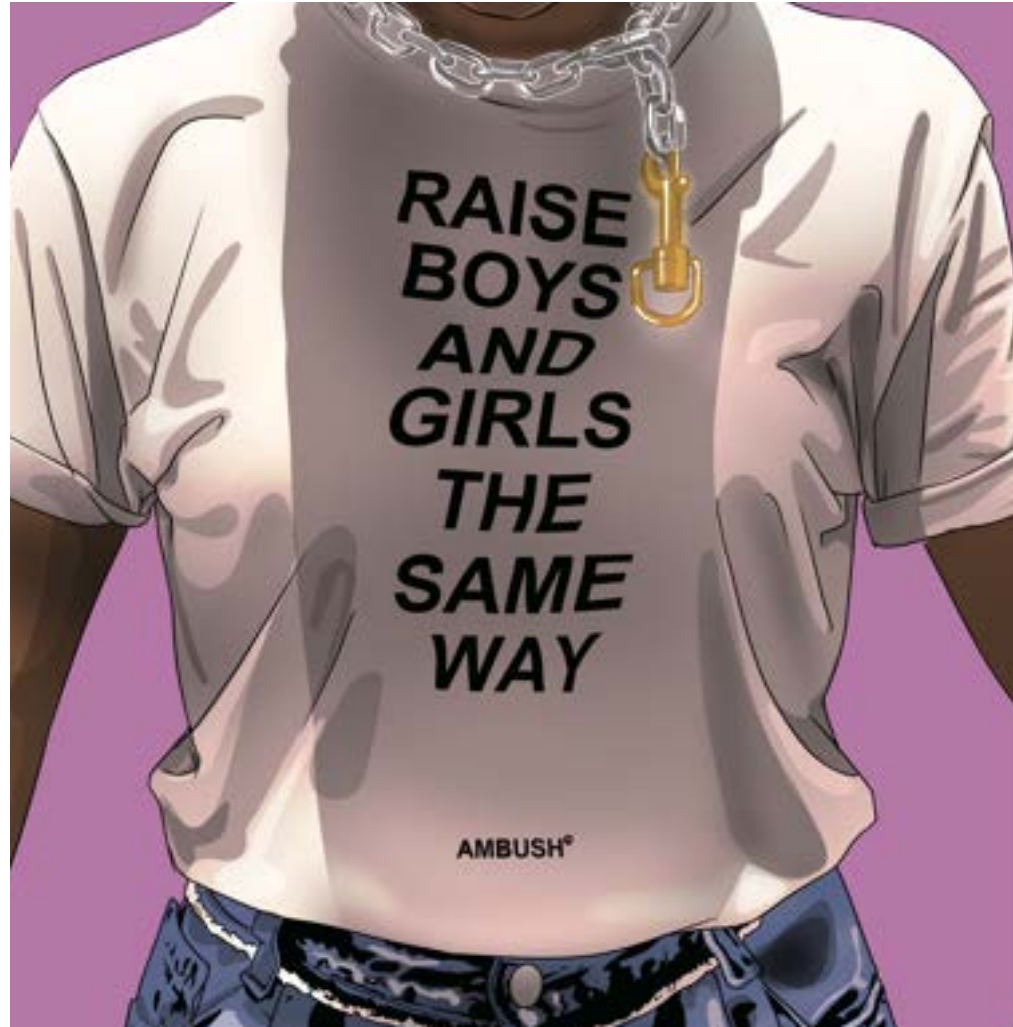


Above: Anna Rathbone pictured with her artwork
Opposite: Campaign billboard in Bedminster, Bristol.
Statement by Anna Rathbone



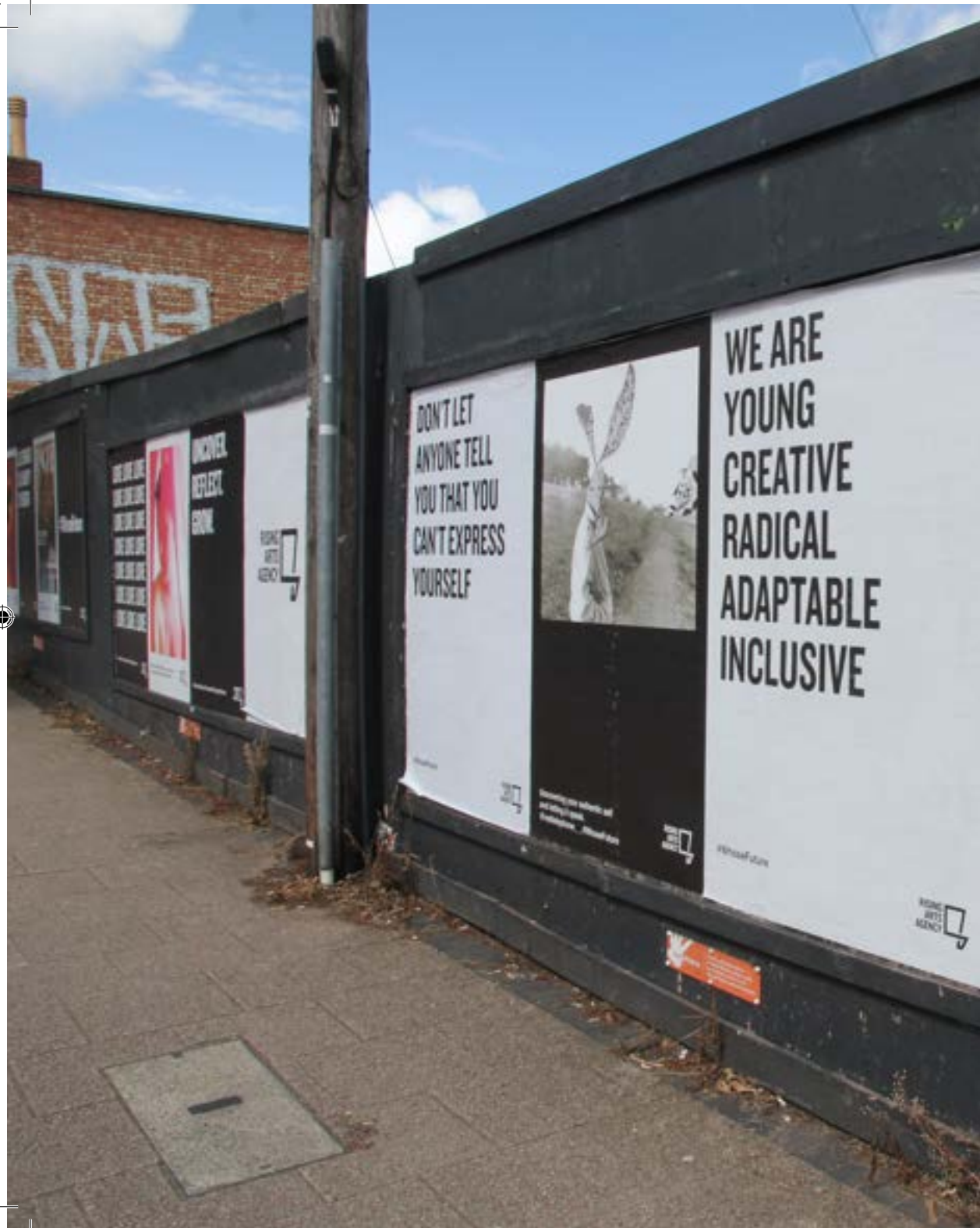
Far left: Artwork by Stacey Olika
Left: Artwork by Brook Tate
New suns will keep rising
Right: Brook Tate pictured with his artwork





Right: Artwork by Nick Ogr
 Opposite: Artwork by RTiiika





Left: Campaign artwork on
Lower Ashley Road, St Pauls, Bristol
Opposite: Artwork by Yasmin Qureshi
*Uncovering your authentic self and letting
it speak*





Left: Artwork by Owain Astles
More light, more colour



Above: Artwork by Alfie Dwyer
Above right: Alfie Dwyer pictured with his artwork





Right: Artists at the campaign launch
Opposite: Artwork by Ozzy Algar
Strength is made visible through vulnerability



Above: Artwork by Asmaa Jama
Community is a verb
Opposite: Applause for #WhoseFuture Campaign
Manager, Rosa ter Kuile, at the campaign launch





Right: Amber-Ruth Watson (pictured opposite) with her poem 'Sisters'
Because womxn rock



ACCESS & WELLBEING



Left: Artwork by Bryony Throup
Stillness and serenity in my own space
Opposite: Artists at the campaign launch



Above: Artwork by Brook Tate

Opposite: Artwork by Ade Sowemimo, Ashley Road, Montpellier, Bristol





ACCESS & WELLBEING



Right: Artwork by Brook Tate
Opposite: Artists at the press launch event. Jasmine Thompson, Malizah, Rosa ter Kuile, Ella Trudgeon, Brook Tate, Parys Gardener (left to right)

CLIMATE JUSTICE



The climate crisis intersects with all systems of oppression such as racial injustice & colonial violence. It does not exist in a vacuum, isolated away from racism and poverty, these issues are intertwined. The crisis is fundamentally a human issue, the symptom of centuries of colonialism and extractivism. There can be no climate justice without social justice.

We have a misconception that climate justice is about protecting future generations when the reality is that black, indigenous and people of colour have been fighting for survival on the frontlines of environmental exploitation for as long as colonial violence has existed.

Climate justice is racial justice.

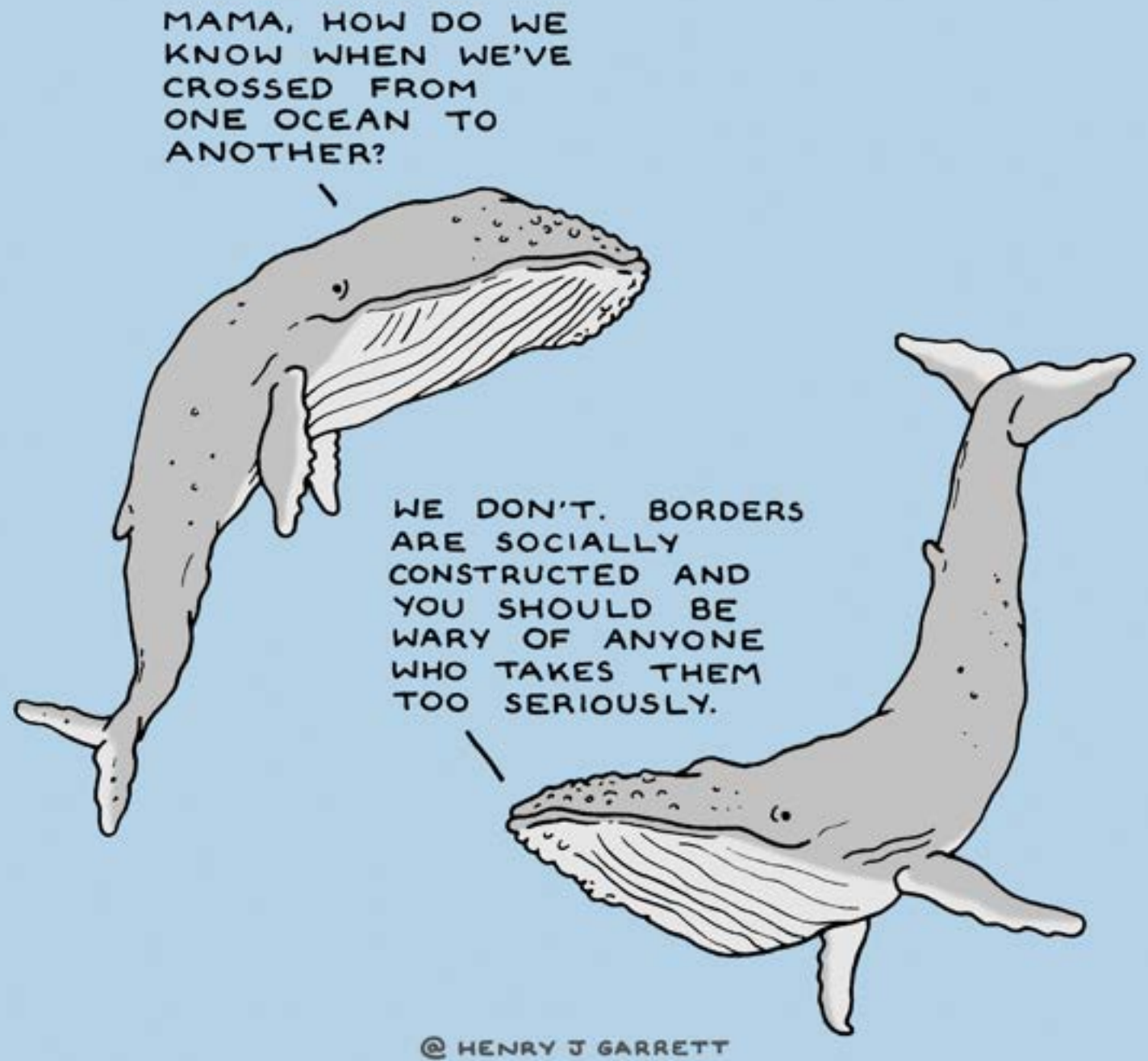




Left: Campaign billboard on Stapleton Road, Easton, Bristol



Above: Artwork by Ella Trudgeon
Climate justice is social justice
Opposite: Artist Ella Trudgeon with her artwork



Opposite: Artwork by Henry Garrett
Choose lives over lines on a map
Right: Still taken from the campaign animation created by Alfie Dwyer

WHAT'S NEXT?

We want to know why it took a global pandemic to give public space to young people. Why it took a global pandemic for the world to pay attention to the #BlackLivesMatter movement. Why it took the threat of a global recession for even the most tentative conversations about housing security, income protection, and all the other things that are already being “wound down”.

We know the answer, but we want you to say it.

In an ideal world, Rising wouldn't need to exist. Until then, we want money to put directly into the hands of young people. We want platforms to give voice to the people you aren't listening to yet. We want space to think, to breathe, and to be. We want power to share.

THE WORK CONTINUES.

THANKS TO

Bristol City Council and Georgina Bolton, Public Art Officer, for commissioning the #WhoseFuture campaign.

Out of Hand for sharing their expertise, and for printing and installing the work on Bristol's streets.

Plaster Creative Communications for their support promoting the campaign.

The Chocolate Factory for their additional financial support.

BurghArts for use of their billboard in St Werburghs.


Colin Moody, Kamina Walton, Shamil Ahmed, artists and friends for their photos.

Editorial team: Stacey Olika, Rosa ter Kuile, Emma Blake Morsi and Kamina Walton, who designed and archived the official #WhoseFuture campaign book.

NATIONAL & LOCAL SUPPORT SERVICES

For a resource list of organisations and services supporting young people please visit our website www.rising.org.uk/resources



A hand is shown with the word 'EQUAL' written in black marker on the palm. The hand is positioned against a vibrant, multi-colored graffiti background featuring shades of blue, yellow, pink, and black. The word 'EQUAL' is written in a bold, blocky font across the palm of the hand.

It's 2020 and we're experiencing extraordinary and challenging times in lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic. For the creative sector the impact has been devastating with buildings closed, staff furloughed, live performance and gallery-based shows cancelled. For Rising - a small, agile Bristol-based arts agency empowering young people to collectively aspire, provoke and mobilise towards radical cultural change - it demands rapid, responsive action. Then we get a call asking if we could pull together a huge, public facing campaign celebrating culture in the city with four weeks to make it happen...

37 YOUNG ARTISTS.

370+ POSTERS.

A LOT TO SAY.

**RISING
ARTS
AGENCY**

