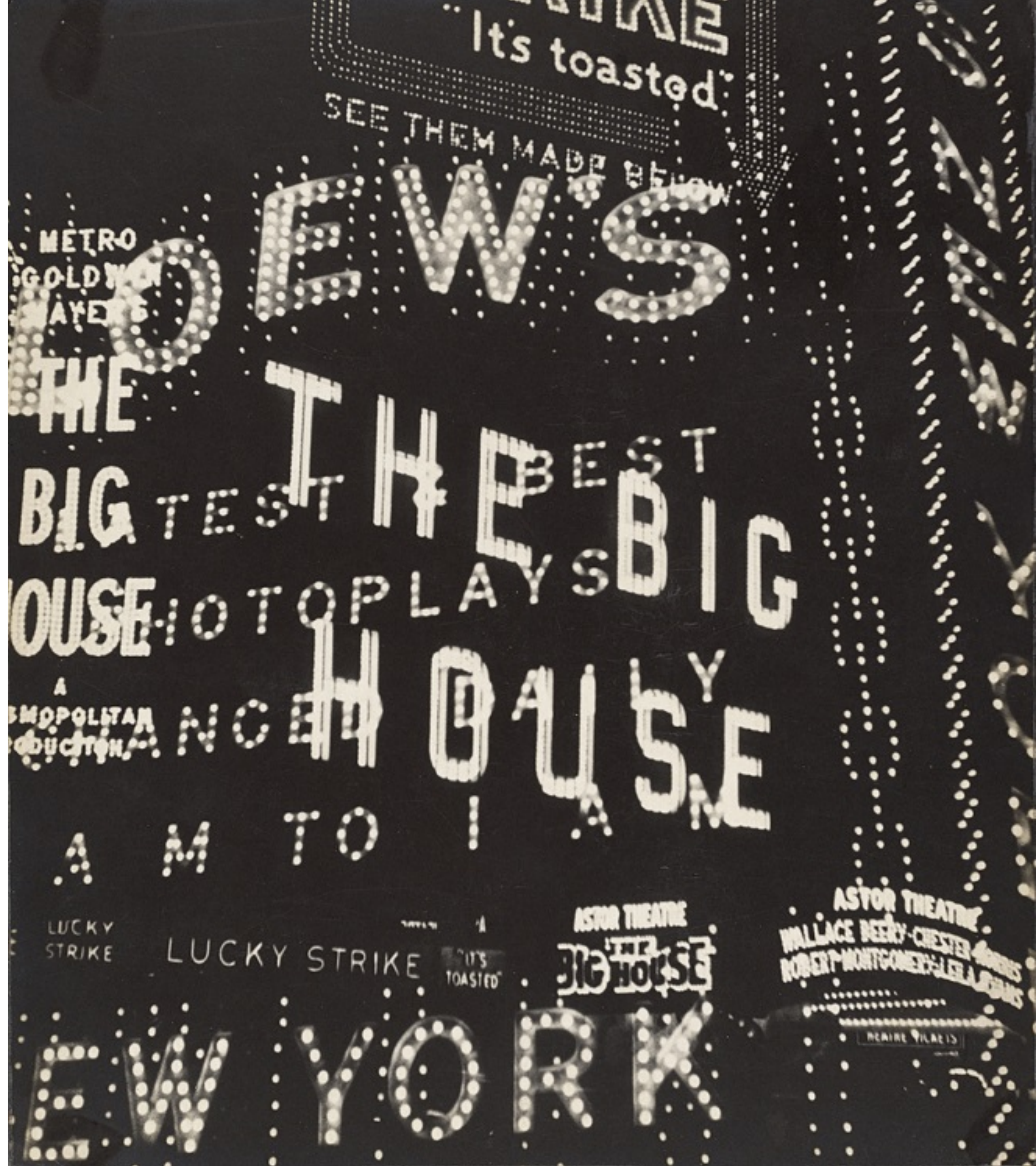


# Why Words, Why Writers?

Names, how places are described, how people chose to describe where they live to others, has a significance. The impact and consequence associated with such a small word – “of ” – in West ‘of’ Waterlooville demonstrates this and links to identity and sense of place.

Writers spend time looking for exactly the right word for the right situation, worrying about the exact placing of a comma, because for writers finding the perfect way to convey an idea, a message, an emotion, is what they do. Everyone is ostensibly speaking the same language, but the communication gaps are vast and deep in places. Because of their understanding of and skill in using language, a writer might be uniquely placed to find ways of communicating across these gaps.





# Strengths of our Proposal and why it is appropriate for West Waterlooville:

- The programme shares a **universality**, everyone's voice/story is equally valid.
- Even if you don't want to share your voice, you can engage with the project in a more passive way through simply **reading** the words which appear throughout the site in the course of the year as opposed to writing.
- It is an **accessible approach**– the project can have an online element and we can easily translate visual **words into audio**.
- The words shared throughout the development will be large, easy to read and **visually engaging**.
- We will not duplicate existing cultural community provision within the area. This project respects this and **does not take focus away** from local providers.
- It includes elements of **mentoring and skills development** within the area for local writers/creatives.
- We have identified a local organisation with the skills and experience to partner with us who have a **proven track record** in commissioning the written word workshops.
- The activity is suited to the community resources currently available – it doesn't need studio space / specialist equipment etc; it can be **flexible and fleet of foot**.
- We propose temporary outcomes which will **change throughout the year**. In so doing we keep the project fresh and also test the water within the development as to what they may like to see in the future.





## Strand 1: Case Studies



## Case Study 1:

### Off the Shelf: Text in the City Sheffield

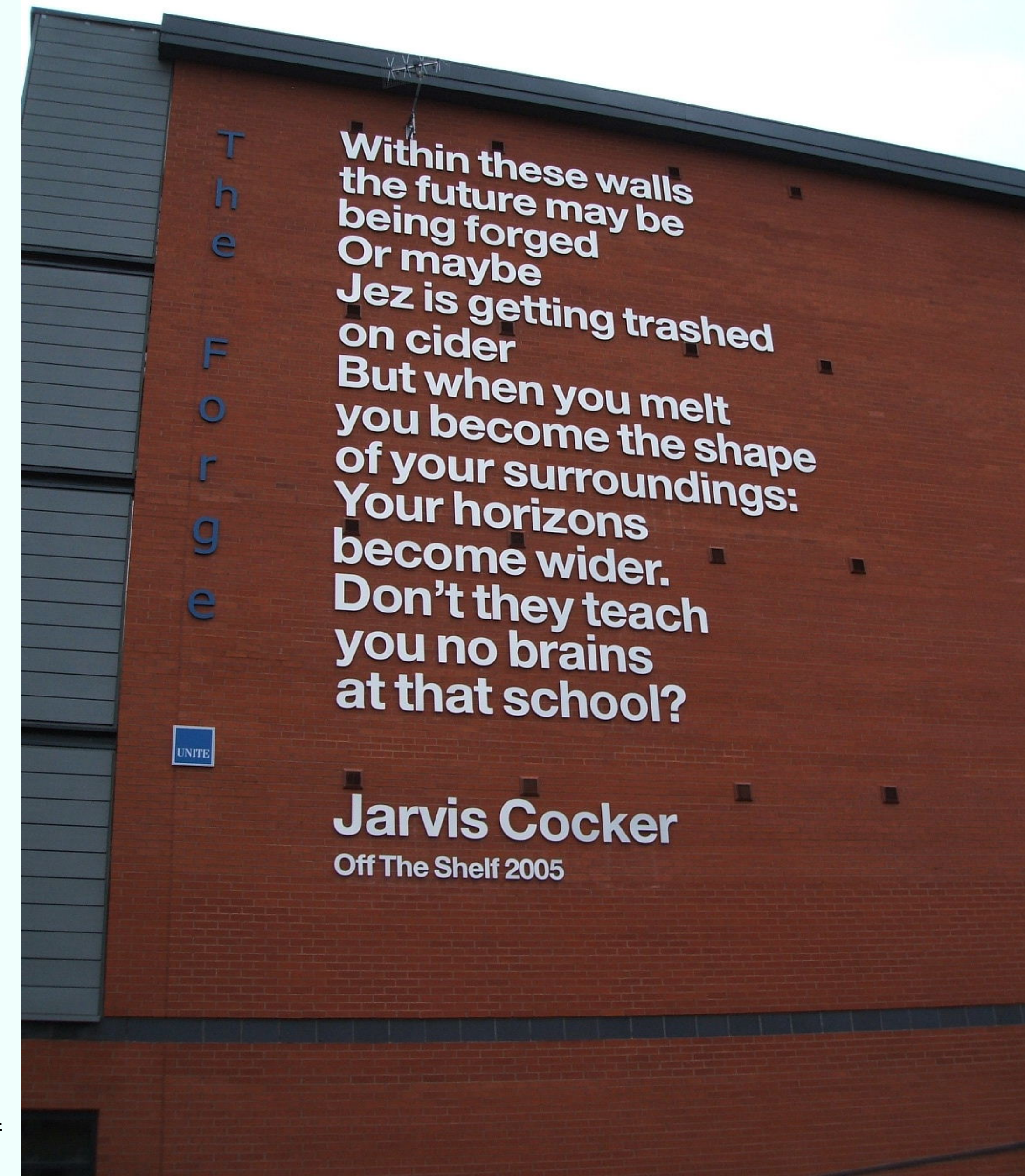


Image: Jarvis Cocker for Off the Shelf



For the 11 years the Off the Shelf Festival of Writing and Reading, working with Public Art Consultant Paul Swales, has commissioned writers to create text for pieces of public art. This innovative ongoing project is called Text and the City. A variety of projects have been realised including a poem by Benjamin Zephaniah cut out of steel balconies in a new block of flats, a poem by Jarvis Cocker on the wall of student accommodation and, most recently, a major piece commissioned from Poet Laureate Andrew Motion and sited on one of Sheffield Hallam University's tallest buildings on Howard Street, Sheffield.

As the project developed, a simple and consistent use of font and graphics has been adopted. Instead of working with another artist such as a sculptor or visual artist, Text and the City has worked with a graphic design company who have brought their own creative vision of a clear, readable font for the work. High profile writers have been commissioned to create new work specific to the place in which it is to be displayed. Public Art Consultant Paul Swales says that he has found it “*a joy to work with writers*” and he has been consistently impressed by the work produced, work “*that truly speaks to the place it is read in*”.

This work is about an individual writer's response to a specific place. Paul Swales believes this is a way of working which allows the writer's own creative voice and vision to be articulated and makes a space for the reader's own imagination and creative response. As part of the project, opportunities are sometimes made for the writers to share their work and practice with local schools and other groups.

Image: Andrew Motion for Off the Shelf





# How is this relevant to Waterlooville?

- The project has clear aims and objectives – to raise the profile of poetry in the city and enhance the city-scape visually.
- There are clearly defined briefs that take into account the physicality of the outcome at the end of the commissioning period.
- A consistent use of strong visual identity gives the pieces a city-wide identity and ensures they are clearly readable.
- It is an example of how new writing can be integrated into the built environment, whether permanent or temporary
- By commissioning experienced writers they come up with a valuable creative response and the ability to execute the project successfully.



Image top: Sheffield writer Warda Yassin unveils love poem for city

Image bottom: Sheffield Hallam University students illustrate the festival



# Case Study 2: Simon Armitage: Blossomise

Commissioners: National Trust and Faber

Illustrations by Angela Harding

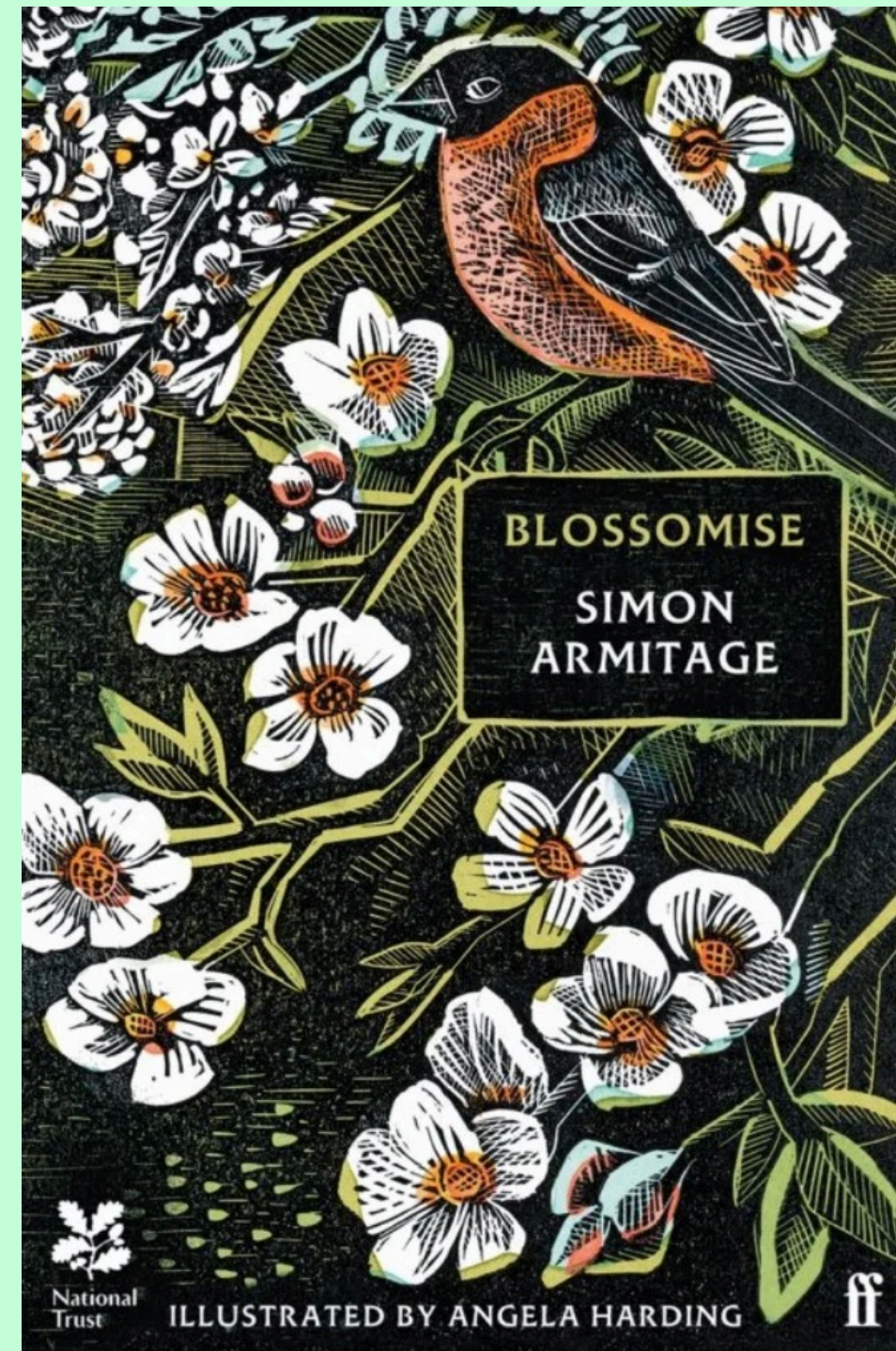




'Blossomise' is a two year commission exploring themes such as folklore, seasonal rhythms, the beauty of nature and the loss and restoration of blossom.

The commissioned collection will consist of 10 poems and other works, which will be released over 2023 and 2024. They'll be created by Simon and his band LYR (Land Yacht Regatta) in collaboration with communities and other creatives across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The artists have collaborated with choirs, young film-makers and local communities to create the performances, taking place throughout the country.

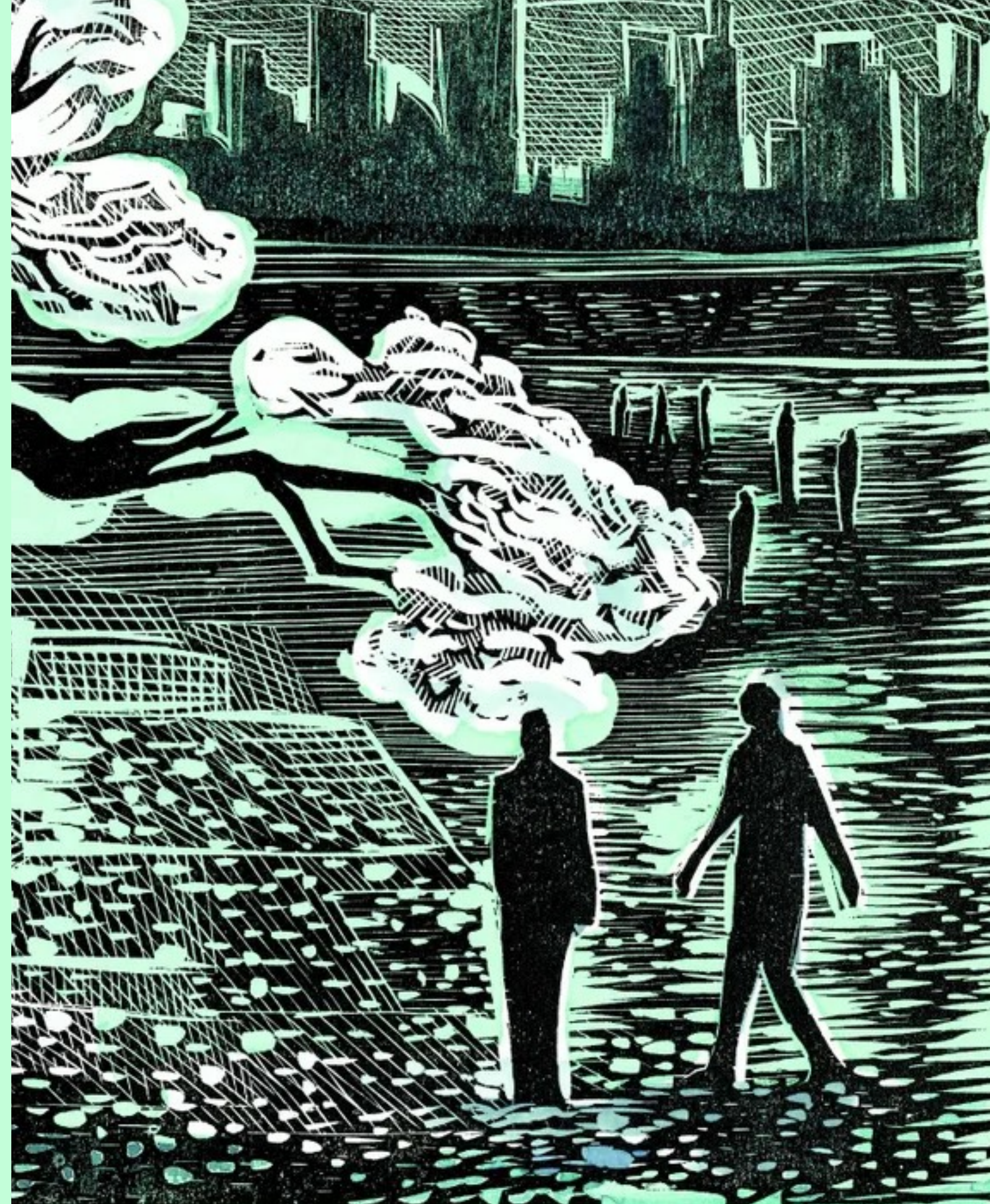




# How is this relevant to Waterlooville?

- Simon Armitage's national profile has been used effectively to draw attention to the annual 'blossom watch' campaign. Working with an established writer in Waterlooville could have a similar effect, raising the profile of the area and increasing a sense of pride.
- Although primarily a project in which the output is a new volume of poetry, the online campaign has allowed poetry to be shared positively on platforms such as X in smaller bite-sized pieces, creating alternate and more accessible ways to experience the commission.
- The project also draws similarities in the mixed use of poetry as song lyrics. Working with words in a similar way our Strand 1 writers commission would have the flexibility to be used within song, online in posts, as video content and also as inspiration for further creative activity within the development.

Illustrations by Angela Harding

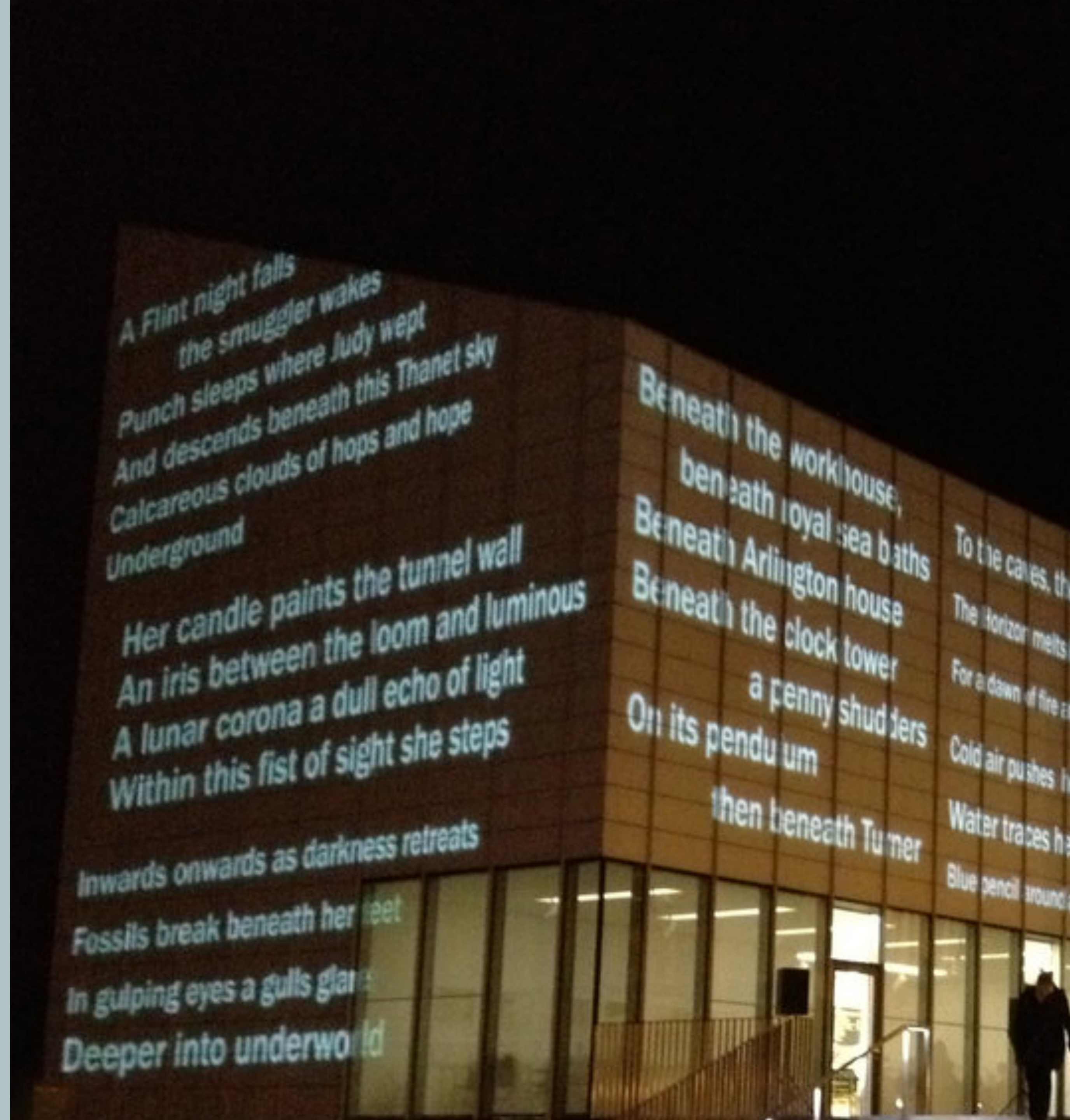




# Case Study 3:

## Lemn Sissay: Poetry Isle

Poetry Isle was designed and delivered by arts organisation 'Workers of Art' in partnership with Community Development at Thanet District Council and Arts Council England.





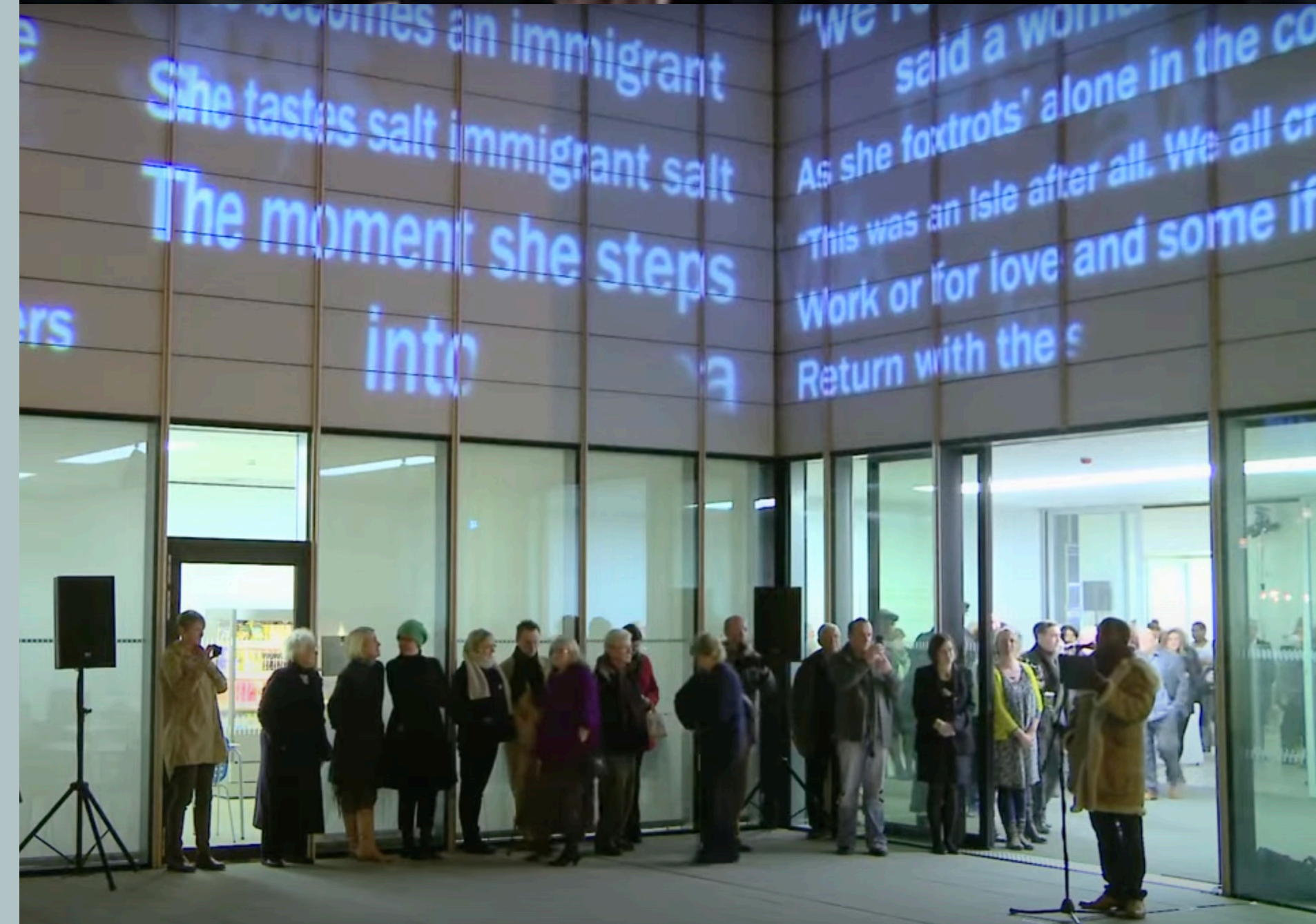
Lemn Sissay worked with three communities within Thanet - Minster, St Nicholas at Wade and Margate. From the communities he gathered thoughts, feelings and memories about the places they live - these then inspired the poem he wrote for the people of Thanet.

The poem was presented as part of a community celebration on the 26th January 2012 in each of the three places about which it had been written. In St. Nicholas at Wade the poem was translated into a song, in Minster a dance was performed at the Abbey and in Margate the poem was projected onto the Turner Contemporary building.

The Project aimed to explore the role of the artist within our changing communities and more specifically to promote, inspire and stimulate a love of poetry.

Kent based projection company Clever Projections created a dynamic and visually stimulating projection of the poem that was launched on the day of celebration and remained on the building for 4 nights. Students from Christchurch University were involved in the design of the animation.

Among the local artists taking part were the company "StevensonThompson" in collaboration with associate dance company "Moving On". International composer, conductor and musician Tony Castro created a song inspired by the poem. This was sung by a local community choir "The Big Sing".



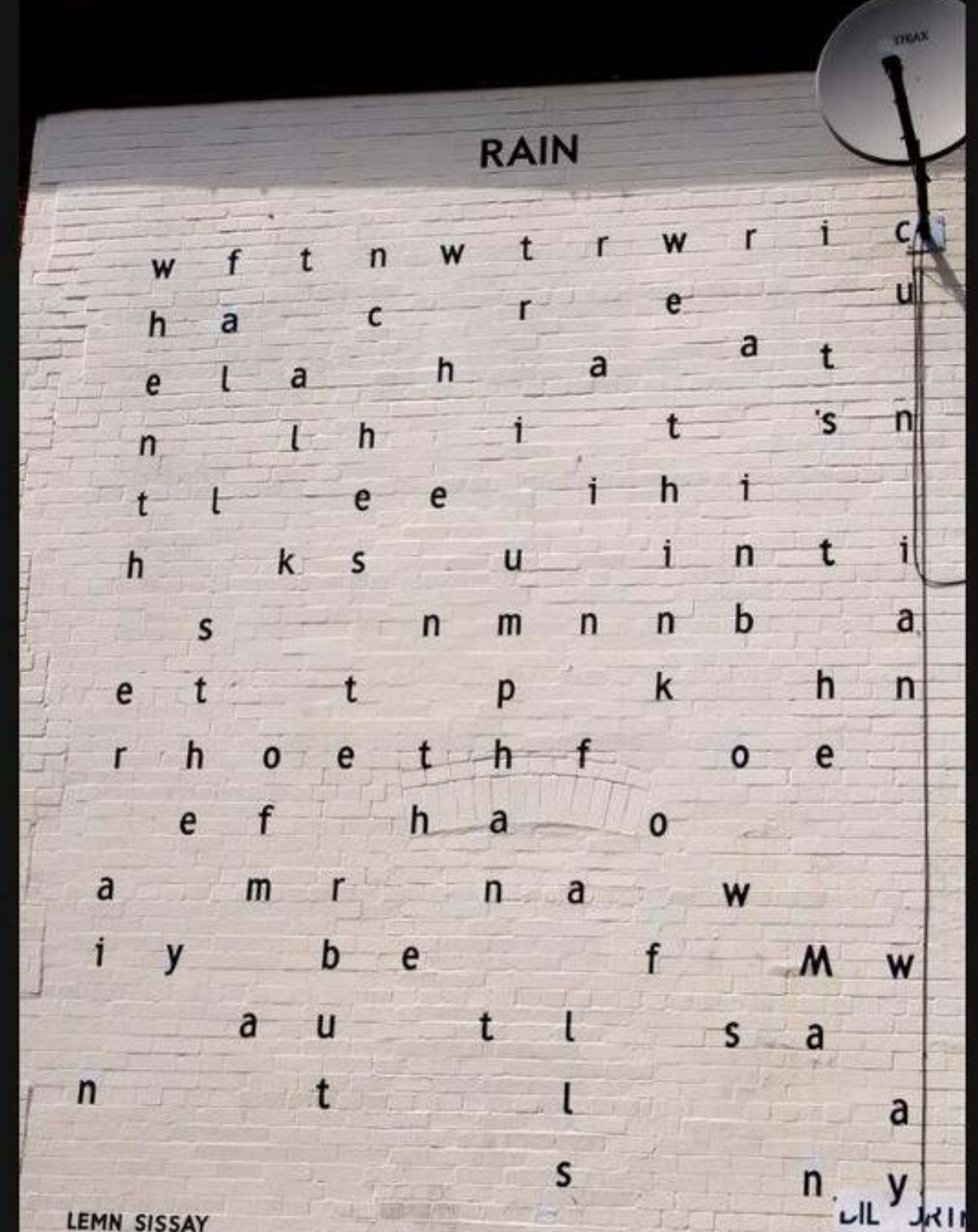
Images right: Opening night event, 26 January 2012



# How is this relevant to Waterlooville?

- Poetry Isle had many different dimensions and ways for the local community to get involved. This included opportunities to take part in and/or experience many different artforms.
- The main opening event was celebratory, Sissay's work elevated the stories and the life of the town and created a newsworthy event which brought a pride to Thanet
- The project connected groups of people together, creating lasting partnerships. For example the Big Sing Choir which was created for the purpose of performing the poem remained together following the event and is now one of the largest community choirs in the UK. They have also gone on to work with other contemporary artists and composers.
- Writers such as Sissay, who are experienced in sharing their words outwith the traditional book format, in landmark works such as the one pictured (right) can bring a playfulness to language that can be appreciated across generations.

Image: Lemn Sissay, Rain





# Case Study 4:

## Rowan McCabe: Door to Door Poetry





Door-to-Door Poetry is a project by Rowan McCabe. Starting in his home town of Newcastle upon Tyne, Rowan began knocking on strangers' doors and asking what is important to them; he then went away and wrote a poem about this, free of charge, before bringing it back and performing it on their doorstep.

The project was funded by Arts Council England and was featured in the Guardian, on BBC Breakfast and on NPR.

Rowan blogged about the entire experience and you can read the stories of the people he met and the poems he wrote for them [here](#); from the beginnings of the project and his visit to the infamous Byker Wall, to his journey around the whole of England, including his trip to the Anti-Fracking Nanas in Blackpool and the isolated island of Lundy.

Rowan also performs on stages as well as doorsteps and has appeared at Glastonbury Festival and the Royal Albert Hall.

🕒 This article is more than 7 years old

## The world's first door-to-door poet: 'I thought people would tell me to piss off'

**At this year's singularly muddy Glastonbury, Rowan McCabe explained why he was delivering bespoke poetry to bedraggled campers**



📷 Poet's calling ... Rowan McCabe offers his services to a festivalgoer.



# Poet on the Rails

For Donna from Bishop Auckland, who professed (confessed?!) to writing poetry herself. Traveling out for a day in Saltburn with her grown-up daughter Martha, she enthused about the poetry of Larkin. Donna, if you read his, you must start submitting your poems for publication!

With each clack of the track  
over old bone sleepers,  
her alphabet fingers  
remember.

The ghost of old Larkin  
is playing conductor,  
keeping librarian order  
among rattling vowels.

She frames the picture  
on muchloved wall space  
in her pantry mind  
to bake it well later.

Harry Gallagher.  
gherpoet.wordpress.com/



# How is this relevant to Waterloooville?

- Rowan's project is a good example of how a writer could approach the project in a non-tradition way, involving the local community but in a quieter way.
- The work is focused on conversations and stories from people who perhaps felt their words were not 'worthy' of poetry. The individual nature of how he works allows people to feel listened too and included.





## Strand 2: Case Studies



Case Study 5:

Art Assassins X Cecilia Knapp:  
Honey Locust Baby



and kind of encrypt your life story or secrets

Image: Honey Locust Baby film still



# HONEY LOCUST BABY



and kind of encrypt your life story or secrets



# How is this relevant to Waterlooville?

- The project illustrates the pairing of writers working in a project based way with young people and what successful co-creation can look like.
- The project is location-specific, drawing on the urban areas in which the Art Assassins live and their different relationships to the area.
- Cecilia Knapp was a well chosen writer for working with this group and she was able to gently guide and support the Art Assassins, allowing them to feel an ownership of the project. The selection of appropriate writers for Strand 2 workshops is essential to our proposed programme.
- The project utilises Instagram and TikTok as platforms to engage young people, in a similar way our Strand 2 writers could use social media to reach groups within the development and allow them to create online communities.



Image: Art Assassins Instagram grid



## Case Study 6: The New Mothers Writing Circle





BBC

# EMPOWERING NEW MUMS





# How is this relevant to Waterloooville?

- The project focuses on certain groups who perhaps feel they do not have time to take part in a creative activity just for themselves
- The project created a strong sense of community and allowed mothers to build a local support network which endured past the organised workshop period.
- Even groups that are considered 'unlikely' to want or be able to participate due to circumstances can be reached and engaged when projects are shaped and marketed by those experienced in doing so.
- As well as collective impact writing projects can bring about positive impact on individuals in a very personal and meaningful way

It was much, much more valuable to me than just any baby class. It connected me with my creativity and myself at a time when nothing else did.

I was a little bit terrified when I signed up as someone who had not done creative writing since school, but having taken part I wish every mother had the opportunity to be part of a group like this. These conversations about motherhood are so important, and it feels like no-one else is having them.

I really enjoyed the focus on creativity. At a time in your life where everything becomes about the practicalities of being responsible for a small human it was so wonderful to set aside an hour or two a week to create.

I valued that the focus was the mums and not the kids.

The nicest thing for me was the sense of community fostered within the group - it felt a very supportive and non-judgemental 'safe space' to air thoughts and

I found the actual writing exercises stimulating right from the start, but they became more and more profound for me as we went along. I use writing in my professional life but had been wondering whether it was something I would go on with at all. It really seemed impossible. I feel that not only has the group brought my confidence back



Words to Walls,  
Words to Floors,  
Words for all







Channel 4, Proud All Over, Brand Campaign



A nighttime photograph of the New York State Supreme Court Building. The building's facade is illuminated, showing the classical architecture with columns and a pediment. A large, bright yellow text overlay reads "WE ARE THE VOICES BEHIND THE WALL". The text is centered and spans across the middle of the image. The background shows the building's details, including statues on the roof and an American flag on the left. The sky is dark, and some lights from the building and surrounding area are visible.

# WE ARE THE VOICES BEHIND THE WALL

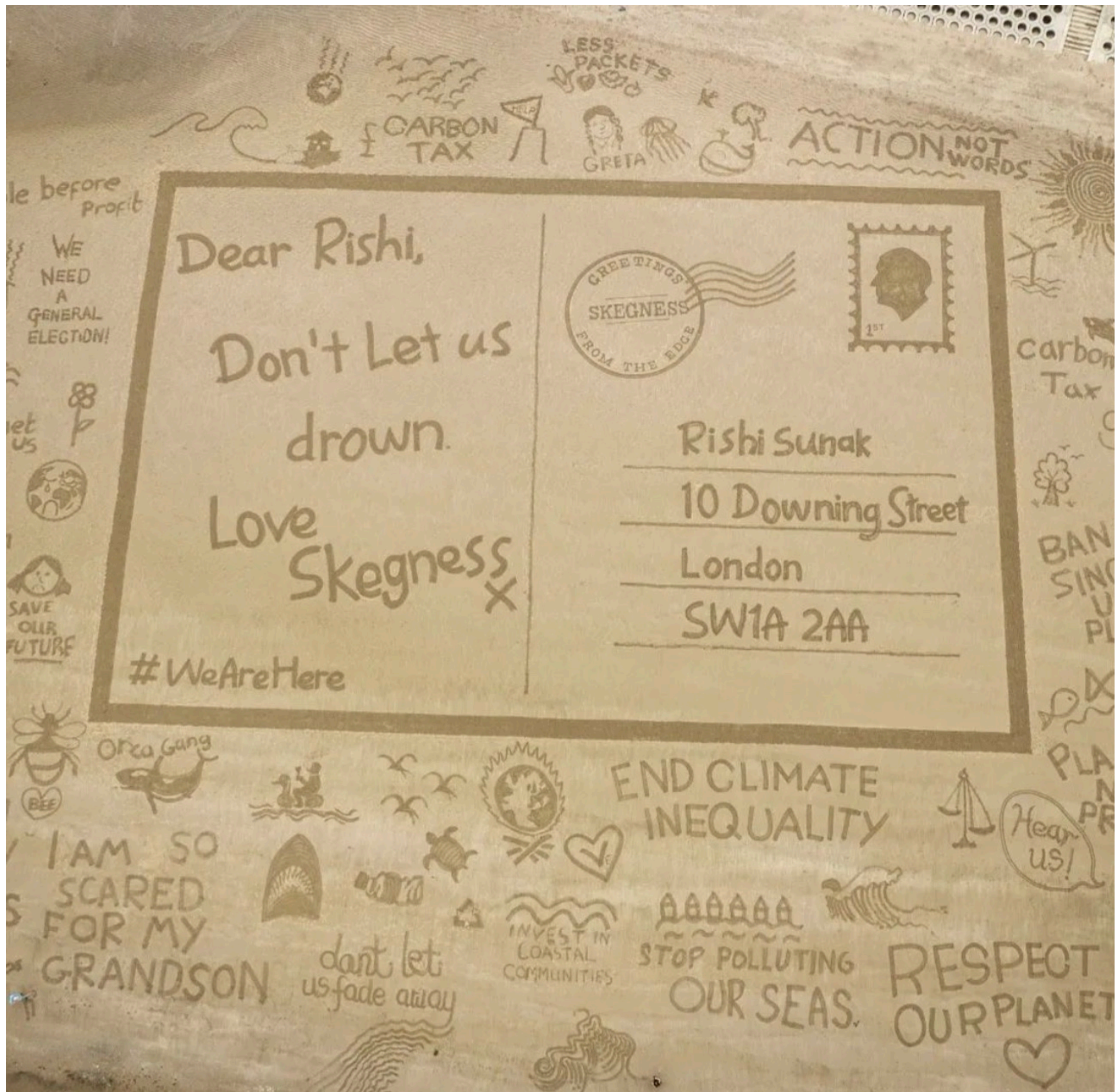
"The Writing On The Wall" art installation projects writings by incarcerated people onto the sides of buildings, such as The New York State Supreme Court Building,





Ed Ruscha, Honey, I Twisted Through More Damn Traffic Today, High Line, New York





Sand in Your Eye, temporary public artworks