

WE ARE LYNN 2023: Sound Mirrors //Evaluation Report



A tactile sound and light installation created by the young people of King's Lynn, exploring their town, identities, and sense of place.

HEADLINES

- Sound Mirrors was shown in King's Lynn from 12 to 29 October 2023, delivering two public artworks at Greyfriars Tower: a physical installation underneath with sound and light, accompanied by a large-scale animated projection on the Tower.
- The project enabled 94 engagements by young people as co-creators who worked with three artists to develop the final artworks.
- The project achieved at least 1892 audience engagements in person and 931 online, plus a wider social media reach of 28.4k and media reach of 39k.
- Collusion levered income of £24.5k for the project, all new investment into the town.

1 Overview

WE ARE LYNN is a new series of projects that will be delivered over three years from 2023 to 2025. Led by Collusion, the projects work with young people as cocreators to explore their town, identities and sense of place. Collusion's goal is to establish King's Lynn as a national centre of excellence for town-scale light and projection based public artworks. We Are Lynn seeks to actively increase engagement with the arts by young people aged 16 to 30 years old as makers, as well as supporting them with aspirations to develop careers in the creative sector by providing valuable work experience.

For the **2023 We Are Lynn project** we worked with Norwich based sound artist and musician Oliver Payne, who had previously taken part in our first King's Lynn project, the [2017 R&D Challenge](#). Together we developed the concept for the project, bringing in two other artists to complete the team.

Over a series of 19 workshops, the three artists worked with **young people** from across the town to develop the artworks, which were shown at Greyfriars Tower from 12 to 29 October 2023, with a launch/ private view for participants and partners on 11 October. In total, there were 94 engagements by young people, including 22 engagements as regular attendees at a series of workshops (deep engagement), with the rest the result of engagement with one-off workshops (broad engagement).

It is always difficult to accurately count the level of **audience engagement** with free, outside art that is on display for an extended period of time. However, using a digital interaction counter we were able to estimate that at least 1,892 people came and saw the installation close up. Others will have watched the projections from further away and therefore were not counted by the interaction counter.

The **budget** for the project (artists fees, production costs, communications activity) was £24.25k, with funding coming from Clarion Housing (£10k), UK Government through the [UK Shared Prosperity Fund](#) (£6.25k), Norfolk County Council (£5k) and the Audrey Muriel Stratford Trust (4k). Additionally, delivery in terms of Collusion's time was supported by revenue funding, which for this project was worth around £25k, via annual support from Arts Council England (NPO) and the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk (SLA).



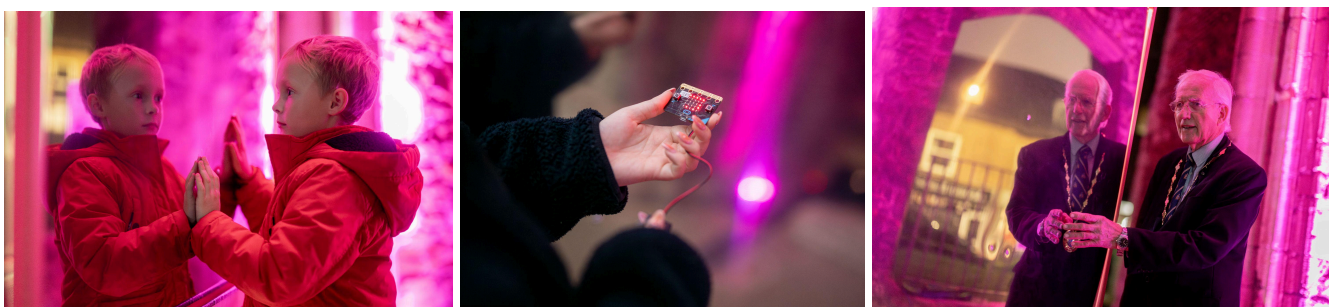
2 Creating the Sound Mirrors

Sound Mirrors was a sound-based artwork that invited you to reflect on your own identity and the identity of place. During October 2023, the large scale sound sculpture and projection gave a fresh perspective to the thoughts and feelings of the young people of King's Lynn.

During March and April, Collusion worked closely with CREA, The Workshop, the College of West Anglia, King's Lynn Library and Springwood High School to recruit young people. Taking place from May to October, workshops for young people ran weekly throughout term time, led by the team of three artists working on the project: Lead Artist and sound artist Oliver Payne (Norwich based) who lead on the sound installation, visual artist Francesca Cant (Norwich) who developed the projections, and creative technologist Kirsten Murray (King's Lynn) who led on the interactive elements.

The workshops supported the cocreation of the artworks, and these took place at the White Barn (11), King's Lynn Library (4), Greyfriar's Tower (2), College of West Anglia (1) and Springwood High School (1). Participants learnt a range of skills during their time on the project including making microphones and recording sound, jelly printing, and programming micro:bits. They collected the sounds that went into the final mix, focusing on sounds that meant something to them - places such as the skate park and sounds from arcade games. All the elements came together under the artistic leadership of Oliver Payne to create the final work.

Situated underneath the monastic tower of Greyfriars at Tower Gardens, a sculpture of sound mirrors – made of polished sheets of steel, amplified sounds, creating a vibration in the metal that spectators were able to touch and feel.



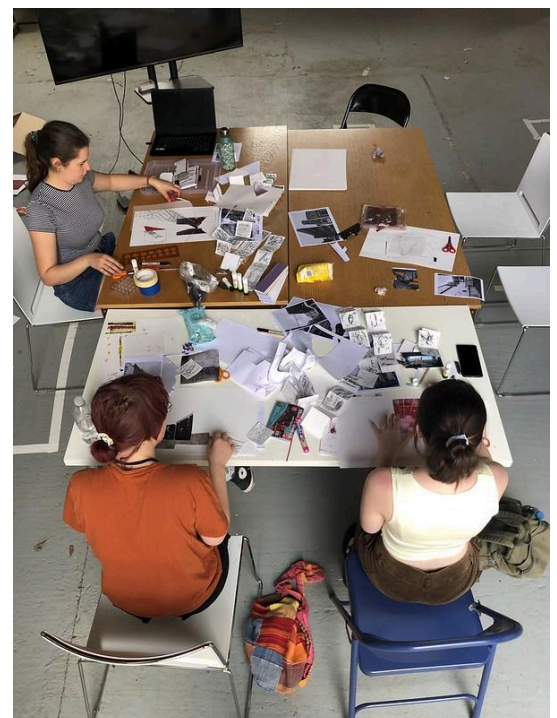
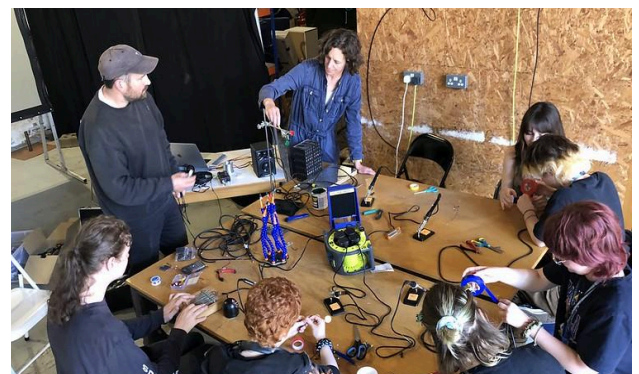
Accompanying the artwork were colourful geometric visuals, projected onto the magnificent monastic tower, which recreated reflections and distortions. Juxtaposed in this peaceful memorial setting, the multi-sensory experience allowed the spectator to contemplate the tone and mood of the young people. As it got darker the lighting within the sculpture came to life and projections on the Tower appeared. Additional LED lighting was placed inside the sculpture, which responded to interaction from

a micro:bit controller programmed with the necessary code. The interaction changed the lighting effects, giving the user control over the colours and sequencing.

Credits for the full creative team who worked on this project can be found [here](#). The team including the young people involved were happy with the results of the project, with everyone feeling that a high quality outcome was achieved that went on to be enjoyed by the public.

3 Feedback

Young people // Feedback from young people was collected across the sessions and through discussion. This is because they were not keen on the idea of responding to a survey. The participants valued the opportunity to take part in a project that helped them to develop creative skills and get valuable work experience. They also liked getting the opportunity to meet people who they hadn't met before and create new connections. They were proud of what they achieved. All young people involved with the project have been invited to join FUSE, Collusion's new youth advisory board, with two young creatives singing up straight away. One of the young people from this project also received employment support from Collusion, to develop their CV and UCAS application.



“ I believe that the work you do to inspire young people to get involved with the more creative side of life and their local area really helps bring out some colour and life into places that truly need it. I'd absolutely love to get involved with more of these incredible projects!”

Participant

From observation, the team members running the workshops found the participants fairly quiet in general with low levels of communication outside the sessions which made it hard to

know who was turning up, but, once there, their response was clearly enthusiastic and highly engaged. Young people on the project formed a personal bond with one another as a result of skilled facilitation by Oliver and Collusion's Producers. New friendships were founded between young people who had creative interests in common. A further observation about one of the 'drop in' micro:bit workshops at the Library made by one of the artists reveals:

“ Two boys came into the library who had never been in there before. They were disappointed to learn that they couldn't use the library computers without library cards. They asked to join the microbit workshop, probably through boredom, but then stayed engaged for 40 minutes and asked lots of questions about the sound mirrors”.

Audiences // The people who came to see the work were very enthusiastic, as indicated in the summary feedback below, where they rated a series of statements out of 100 and average scores are shown.

- It's important that it's happening here 87/100
- I would come to something like this again 86/100
- I had a good time 81/100
- It was different from things I've experienced before 76/100
- It gave me new understanding and perspective of art 66/100

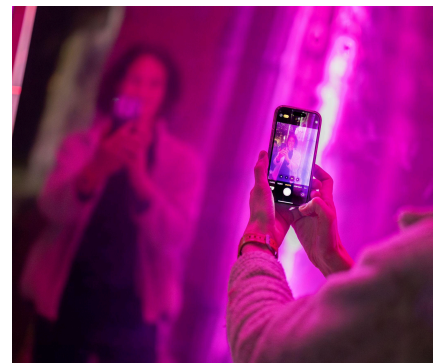
Comments included:

“ The image of the projection on Greyfriars Tower is the best I've seen and the lighting was strong. My children liked the vibrations of the mirrors”.

“Loved the colours and pattern of the lights and pictures”.

“The vibrant colours & the way they moved around the structure”.

“The colours of the lights reflected on the tower”.



"I liked all the different tones coming from the mirrors".

Note: despite offering a £100 cinema voucher as a prize and putting the survey QR on all project materials, we only received 17 completed audience surveys. We had been due to do some collecting of surveys as in-person interviews but illness in the team meant this was not possible. Increasing the number of survey responses will be a priority for us with future projects to ensure the responses equate to a representative sample.

A further observation from one of the artists reveals that a local SEN group came to see the work daily throughout the project's run:

I was really touched that the work was visited by a group with sensory impairment - for me that was a hugely significant outcome. I was also really proud that the whole process was a sort of eye opener for some of the participants who had no prior experience of art shows, or perhaps even understood the merit of such a thing.



Artists // The feedback from artists and creatives is positive, indicating that they valued being part of the Sound Mirrors team (83/100), with a high inclination to take part in something like this again (79/100). The team say that it was very important it was happening in King's Lynn (78/100). Also, it contributed to the development of their artistic practice or business (76/100), and they gained new skills (73/100), new collaborators (70/100) and connections (68/100), as well as new opportunities (62/100). They valued input from Collusion (78/100) who they say responded well to their needs (76/100).

The sound mirrors worked beautifully and the audio was great. The projections looked wonderful on the tower.

I think the translation of sound into touch was particularly successful I'm hugely grateful that Collusion supported a project all about sound. It's often the forgotten about art form and for them to take a risk like that, particularly with something new and untested, is really appreciated.

It was a great privilege to be asked to be a part of the Sound Mirrors project. The collusion team were incredibly understanding about supporting me to complete this project even though I am a full time

teacher and this was incredibly important to me. It was also brilliant to share hands on practical, tactile printmaking workshops with the young people which then transformed into something digital. The highlight was seeing the project come together at grayfriars. It was just incredible to see the work projected on such a large scale. Thank you so much for allowing me to be part of this project! It was incredible to see the work projected on the tower and to be able to show my family.

5 Marketing and media coverage

The communications campaign was focused on raising awareness of the project locally and regionally through print (leaflets and posters), advertising (print and online), social media, local newspapers and radio coverage.

Printed materials (posters, flyers and newspapers) were an important device for engagement. The **logo and poster design** developed a strong identity for the project, gaining broad audience awareness of the project. Posters were put up at 20 bus stops, in car parks, on bins, in shops, and at CWA. Additionally 500 A5 flyers were distributed around town centre outlets including the library, the train station, and cafes.

Collusion.org.uk. For the Sound Mirrors page, we had 540 users from 1st October for the month who viewed it a few times, totalling 800 views (21% of total views). For user acquisitions (how users find the site) our highest group was through organic socials (40%), then direct (29%), organic search (21%) and referrals (other sites) (8%). We also established a new King's Lynn focused mailing list, with two e-flyers sent to 131 people, achieving a 50% open rate. A short film documenting the project was made by a young, local film-maker Alex Thaxton. This is shared via the [Sound Mirrors project page](#) of Collusion's website, our [YouTube channel](#) and went out in our newsletter.

Press & Radio. Two press releases were issued to 35 outlets. With Lynn News (readership 9.7k) and Your Local Paper (free, circulation 18k) we ran a half page paid print ad and a 7-day online ad from 20-28 Oct, during half term. The online ad reached 11.3k and generated 290 clicks. We also launched a call out for sound contributions on West Norfolk Radio. Examples of press and radio online coverage:

- <https://www.lynnnews.co.uk/news/sound-and-light-installation-inviting-people-to-reflect-is-u-9335198/>
- <https://www.yourlocalpaper.co.uk/2023/10/20/sound-and-light-launch/>
- <https://www.radiowestnorfolk.co.uk/sound-mirrors/>

- <https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/news/article/1503/experience-a-tactile-sound-and-light-installation-created-by-the-young-people-of-kings-lynn>

On the **social media** front, we regularly created content and posts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, with Facebook targeting local audiences, Twitter targeting regional audiences and partners, and Instagram focusing on creative and cultural tourists more generally. However, there was plenty of cross over between platforms. Facebook including paid ads reached 19.5k with 267 post engagements. Twitter engaged 3.1k and Instagram 5.1k. In addition to our own social media, we were supported by partners such as BCKLWN and local champions such as Discover King's Lynn and Creative Arts East, generating more coverage and reach.

5 Challenges and learning points

These are the key challenges and learning points that we will take forward to future projects.

- 1) **Engagement of young people.** Despite extensive activity to promote the project directly (talks to classes at CWA, various pop up events in King's Lynn) and indirectly (posters, flyers, web, social media, radio, press) it remained very hard to engage young people in the ongoing sessions. Recruitment took longer and was even more work than expected. This is a wider phenomenon in King's Lynn with all cultural and youth engagement orgs/project reporting similar issues. Nevertheless, we need to find ways to improve on this to ensure our resources are not spread too thinly. Learning / action points:
 - a) We are setting up a King's Lynn based youth advisory group called FUSE, who will meet monthly throughout the year, starting January 2024. The group is aimed at 17 to 30 year olds and will help us to connect into various FE colleges and out of school groups, as well as other initiatives in the town.
 - b) In Autumn 2023, an opportunity arose to update a post within the Collusion team to create a King's Lynn based Producer. Now in post, the new Associate Producer, Rosa Torr, will focus on building and consolidating relationships in the town, as well as leading on projects and the development of FUSE. This will help with both the engagement of young people and the fundraising side too.
- 2) **Short-time frame for delivery.** In order to achieve the October timeline for final delivery, the workshops would have benefited from started earlier than May, and we were not able to move the delivery window due to the nature of outside projection work, which optimally needs to

include school holiday time and be dark enough but not too cold/bleak. A number of external factors relating to funding influenced the timing of the delivery of the project, including Collusion's entry to Arts Council England's NPO portfolio in April 2023, which meant that this funding was not available until April 2023 so as an organisation we had limited capacity to work on the project until then. Additionally a decision on the UKSPF funding was expected in early June but was delayed until early July. This meant that we lost time to get the interactive elements up and running before the holiday period got underway. Further, 2023 proved to be a very competitive funding climate overall, meaning we had to take a calculated risk to start the project before all the project funding was confirmed. Learning/action points:

- a) For 2024 we are already seeking funding to be a position to start earlier. However, our first large bid has already been turned down - the funder received 300 bids for a relatively small pot of funding so they are also not providing any feedback. So fundraising is already proving to be a continuing issue (a national one) but we have a focused plan to realise as much funding as possible by the start of March.

Despite the challenging external context that we and our partners find ourselves in in 2024, the action that Collusion has already taken to continuously improve the way we work means that we feel positive about the way forward.

6 Summary of results

- 2 artworks, comprising sound installation with lighting and interactive element plus large-scale projection
- 18 nights of public exhibition
- 94 engagements by young people
- 16 workshops for young people
- Audiences
 - 1892 (at least) in person
 - 931 online
 - 28.4k reach via social media
 - 39k reach via local press and radio.
- £24.25k raised to deliver the project

- Documentation: high res photos taken by Matthew Usher Photography plus short documentary film. These exist as a permanent record of the installation. Both are available for partners use - please credit Collusion plus the creator appropriately.

6 The future

Collusion plans to deliver two further We Are Lynn projects in 2024 and 2025, each focusing on engagement with young people and supporting skills development alongside wider career aspirations. They also support well-being and the creation of new connections and networks.

The 2024 project will focus on the history of cinema in the town. There were at least seven large cinemas in the town in the 1930s and a number of big films have been shot locally. We will be working closely with the Majestic cinema, who turn 100 years old in 2028, exploring their historic resources as well as research collected by True's Yard. These materials will be the inspiration for the development of artworks that reflect young people's own interest in film and cinema. We are currently fundraising to raise £25k to deliver the project and hope to begin workshops in April.

In terms of our general approach to working in King's Lynn, going forwards Collusion will:

- Continue to focus on activity to engages young people in interesting ways to create new public artworks that can be clearly communicated to target audiences.
- Continue to experiment with the opportunity presented by the outside projection infrastructure to create engaging, town-scale experiences that acknowledge the town and its heritage to create innovative contemporary experiences that support and extend the tourist offer. However, we will also extend this to light based artworks and opportunities, making use of new infrastructure such as the large outside LED screen and town centre way finding screens.
- Talk to BCKLWN about how we can support the process and fundraising for the renewal of the projectors through a linked programme of activity.
- Build on the successful relationships and partnerships developed to date, particularly with the College of West Anglia around career development.
- Via our Meanwhile use of the White Barn, we will continue to extend and deepen our relationship with the town's creatives to support skills development around use of creative technologies and the creation of place-based works.

Collusion is committed to a long-term relationship with King's Lynn, seeking to explore and diversify the type of light and projection based public artwork created, amplifying King's Lynn as an innovator in this field, and to develop the skills of locally based creatives, including young people looking to work in the sector. We will continue to apply these ambitions and the evaluation in this report to our future projects.