

Proposal &

Strategic Plan

Portfolio

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[Plein Sight]

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[Plein Sight]

Executive Summary

Plein Sight is a response to how we engage with visual arts today. As with all art movements, their perception and meanings fluctuate with time and in today's society, large corporations are blurring the lines between economic growth and creative expression.

But is this the direction we should be heading in?

Our business, Plein Sight dares to provide a counter argument for artists and creative minds to rally behind.

The company will initially be lead and managed by me and thus the funding will come from my own savings. Building on from this, there will be opportunities to work as a partnership with Bradford 2025 which will enable the productions of additional activities.

The main programme of activities works in tandem with each other: A call out to incentivise artists will be shown in an exhibition that I design. This exhibition will also showcase works produced during a guided tour by me, which will take a community of people around their local area to make plein air drawings.

Profile

My interests lie positively with in art and design, I enjoy making and appreciating art of all styles and disciplines.

During my time studying Architecture, I have developed a keen attentiveness to details and how they fit in holistically with the larger picture. This is not too dissimilar to people within a community, and pencil strokes to drawings.

Through out my involvement around the industry, I started to realise that the future of human creativity was in dire need of a revolution. As corporations and businesses strays further from human principals of expression and creativity, it leans more towards the capitalistic production of work meant solely for economic growth and gain.

This is why I want to position my business, Plein Sight, as a project by and for artists. We aim to re-establish art as a human necessity, to be created and sustained by humans. I believe in a future where local artists are recognised and respected for their work.

Concept Development

Plein Air & Impressionism

In a historical context, the term 'plein air' was popularised by impressionist artists who painted with the intention of capturing the behaviour, movement and feeling, of light as it defines a space. This is illustrated perfectly by Pierre - Auguste Renoir and Claude Monet, who where prominent artists during the late 19th century. They often painted and made art together, and thus would often paint the same scene in their individual perspectives.

The more detailed production of Renior's peice is in stark contrast with Monet's abstract yet more vibrant painting. These are the differences I want to celebrate between creative minds and is something that the business should strive for as an ultimate goal.



Figure 1 - La Grenouillere by Pierre-Auguste Renoir



Figure 2 - La Grenouillere by Claude Monet

Mission Statement

The plein air artists who were also known as the impressionists, dared to go against the classical nature of glorifying singular subject matters and instead, saw a bigger picture. A world that is made up of light, sounds and people, who fill the world with meaning.

It is with this philosophy that Plein Sight operates by. We see how you fill the world with light and sound. And we think that everyone should see it too.

Thus, it is our commitment to work within the best interests of the artists to elevate, support and celebrate what you do best.

We hope you'll show the world that greatness can be found in [Plein Sight].

Objectives

The practical goal of Plein Sight will be to engage the local community of an area to be creative and find value with in the arts. The business will do this by:

- Running plein air sketching session that engages a group of 20 - 30 non - artists in learning and making art within their local area
- Invite artists to participate in a community call out to produce an art piece based in their local area
- Further encourage creativity by producing and distributing drawing kits
- Synergise all produced work to hold an exhibition to celebrate human creativity in the local area.
- Above all, use this project to shift the perspective of art being an exclusive luxury, that in fact it can be found with in you and in 'Plein Sight.'

Operational Programme

The business aims to hold these key activities: Guided group plein air events, Exhibitions showcasing local art, Selling and supporting local artists and The production of an art kit that is designed to enable drawing.

Since this would depend on who my key stakeholders are, it is most likely that the business starts as myself being the sole trader, with the opportunity to grow and collaborate.

As a sole trader...

It would be a priority to ensure that the plein air events and exhibition are planned and executed. This would require planning, marketing, venue hiring and designing which would be handled by me. Art kits would be my main form of income, with the business being unable to be a platform for local artists to sell art. This is due to the nature of sole traders, legal factors such as copyright ownership and financing.

As a partnership...

With Bradford 2025, all of the key activities would be executable and carried out by a team of staff and volunteers. Profits would be made by selling art kits and a cut from local art (sold at a higher price).

As a social enterprise...

All key activities can be carried out, however these would be led by myself and volunteers and any profits from the kits sold would go back into manufacturing more kits and exhibitions. All income from selling local art would go back to the artists.

Case Study: Zone Arts

Showcasing, supporting and selling the works of local artists in the Tottenham area, Zone Arts launched due to the COVID 19, lock-downs and furloughs, leaving many people out of work. Zone Arts goes beyond just providing a platform for commerce, but also fosters a community through blog posts and social media: projecting the voices of artists. Supporting local artists and their community is their highest priority.

I contacted Elena Davidson, the founder and manager at Zone Arts to ask how the business was started as well as the solutions to various problems with in the business.

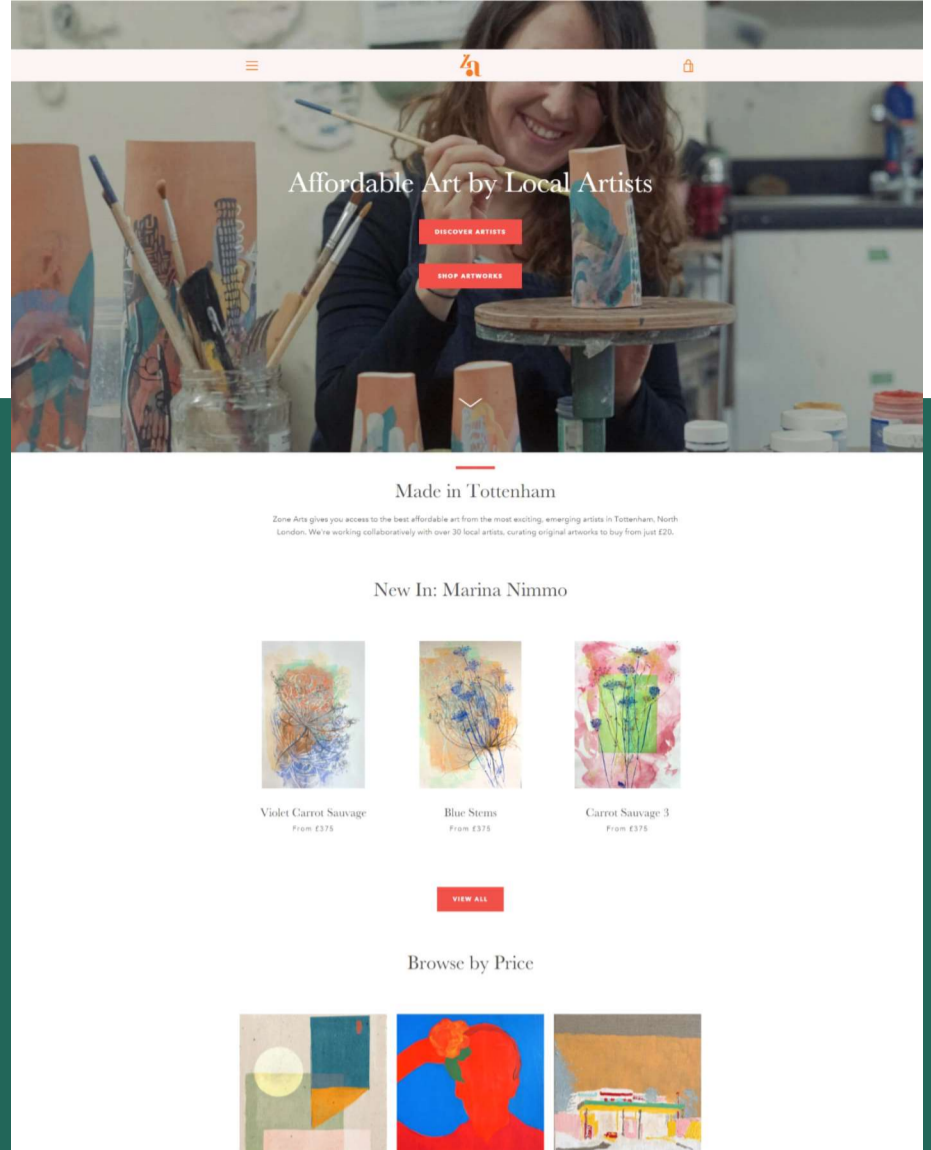


Figure 7 - Zone Arts home web page

Business Structure

The internal team consists of Elena, who manages the company side of things, liaising with artists and partners and her partner who manages technical and finance. They have had interns work with them on social media content in the past.

Local Talent

Zone Arts represents the local community of artists in Tottenham, North London. These consist of people aged between 20 - 55 years who have backgrounds as professional artists or art teachers.

Customers

They target and cater towards people living in the local area, which aligns with their intended programme. However, this doesn't mean they receive orders from abroad, which include areas from the U.S. and Europe.

Risks & Contingencies

Art can be perceived as a luxury to some and thus how available people are to purchasing art is depended on the economy and cost of living crisis. The solution is to invest in outreach implementations in order to reach a wider audience, such as SEO (search engine optimisation) and social media marketing.

As per their programme, supporting the artists is paramount to their business, thus they are flexible with artist availability, from relocation to platform freedom, while continuing to represent them as Zone Arts. In turn, they have also expanded the area of operation to allow more artists to participate.

Viability

Being as receptive and faithful to local businesses and defining themselves as one, they work and collaborate with other businesses and organisations in Tottenham. Thus, to increase the company's viability, they keep collaborating with partners in order to keep growing and expanding their network. Even though no income may come from these partnerships, they are important for the long term support and network of the company.

Organisational Status

Getting to learn and understand the operational aspects about Zone Arts has aided in drawing conclusions and solutions to my own business.

I understand that as the sole trader of the business, I will need to lead and manage all aspects of the business. On top of this, it also means that I hold responsibility over any issues and will need to provide contingencies for each foreseeable risk.

Running as a local business will also involve implementing strategies to engage the local area and knowing the exact demographic of the community will ensure you optimise participation.

Founding

In response to the state of creative industries today, Plein Sight was set up to offer a safe space for artists and engage community in creative activities.

Pragmatically getting people involved is how a discourse around our relation with art. Especially in 2024 with the increasing use of generative AI without considerations of sustainability and legal liability with its' misuse by corporations to displace jobs. In a way, the voice of the business began as early as 2022 in response to the initial increase in use of these technologies.v

Staff

Manager - With the initial start up of the business, I will be the manager. I will lead on engagement, evaluation, and overall generally being the face of the company.

Volunteers - These will be part time workers who will assist or lead the guided plein air sessions and monitoring and guiding people around the exhibitions.

Exhibition fabricators - With the current state of the business, I will be designing and making the exhibition. There is potential to have assistance with construction through a partnership with Bradford 2025 or the hired venue staff.

Stake holders

As a limited company/ social enterprise, funds will mainly be supported by Bradford 2025 as they also have an interest in including projects from the youth into their programmes.

As a sole trader, I would be the one funding the events and exhibitions, meaning I would need to make calculated risks for every engagement.

Management

Initially ran by me, organising dates and locations for plein air events, designing and hiring venues for exhibitions as well as creating art kits. The marketing and social engagement will also be managed by me, making websites, blog posts and social media accounts while maintaining them.

Policies

- Uphold a commitment to support human artists, making the expression of art accessible to all. This means the inclusion of art forms that allow the artist to express one's self and their unique experience as a human. This will include production of digital art but not AI generated or art derivative of another without significant transformation.
- Events will be inclusive and ensure that each plein air location is accessible to all. All activities will incorporate strategies which aim to engage people of different skills, abilities and intentions
- Exhibitions will feature work that is equitably compensated and that accreditation is fair. Any work that is submitted.

Market Research: Competitors

DRAW!

A nationwide drawing project supported by David Hockney.

General programming is to similar, has the support of renowned artist David Hockney. Our advantage: focus on local area and celebrates that community, one city at a time.

Museums and Galleries

Will have pieces of more renown and history, with more funding and a fixed venue. Our advantage: we'd need to define that our works are by local artists, and offer collaborations with these establishments in order to continue to support places that encourage creativity.

Art Shops

The Art Shop: uses same message of encouraging people to make art, however it is in order to sell their products. Our advantage: we would need to emphasise that we want more than to sell consumers products and actually encourage creative practices through pragmatic demonstrations and events.

Threats: Competitors

These are external factors that will effect the viability of my business, by providing a similar service or product. Through my analysis of each identified competitor, Plein Sight will be able to set itself apart from the competition by focusing on people, their creativity and the local area: Providing products that help people engage in making art pragmatically through action; Continuing to support local museums and galleries and focusing on empowering local talent and communities.

Audiences

The Bradford Producing Hub has produced a data review around creative and cultural industries (CCI) and businesses in Bradford.

Overall, the report identifies a large discrepancy with the national employment rate within CCIs and the rate in Bradford. The report also finds a decrease in employment as well as a difference in engaging different genders.

On top of this, a large sub sector of CCIs are in IT and digital creative work. This signifies a need to engage both analogue and digital forms of artmaking, while incorporating the themes of empowering creativity in humans that define the business.

Thus, the target audience will aim to engage younger people who want to work in the arts sector and provide them opportunities to participate in a community lead exhibition. This will be desirable for them as they would be developing useful skills needed to work in creative and cultural industries.

Bradford Producing Hub: Data Review

Statistics about creative and cultural industries in Bradford:

- Population of 560,200 - an increase of 7,600 (1.4%) people since the mid-2022
- 66% female and 30% male, with 4% identifying as non-binary.
- Out of the 24% population aged between 25 - 39, 44% are working in CCI, which also makes up it's largest demographic, just ahead of 40 - 59 (41%).
- The employment rate of people in the Bradford district in CCIs is 1.8%, lower than the national average of 7.3%.
- Employment in the CCI sector in Bradford decreased by 29% between 2015 and 2019.
- An estimated 2,500 to 3,000 sole traders.
- The largest sub-sectors by employment in Bradford are IT, Software, and Computer Services (40%).



Artist led Project Awards

Due to the competitive nature of the industry which makes entering creative sectors unviable for some individuals, Plein Sight aims to provide a way to support all creatives and artists. This will be done by removing any element of what would generally be considered as a competition which would reposition incentives to one of creative development.



Figure 9 - Jess Murrain and Lua Bairstow



Figure 10 - Tim Curtis of Summat Creative

As part of Bradford 2025 City of Culture's efforts to develop the creative space in the district, applications for the Artist Led Project Awards opened. This was a grant of £15,000 to support, create opportunities and showcase artist's work.

Out of 140 applicants, 23 were the recipients of this grant, featuring a diverse range of talents within the district. This incentive provided a basis to question aspects about my my target audience, mainly does there need to be a monetary incentive?

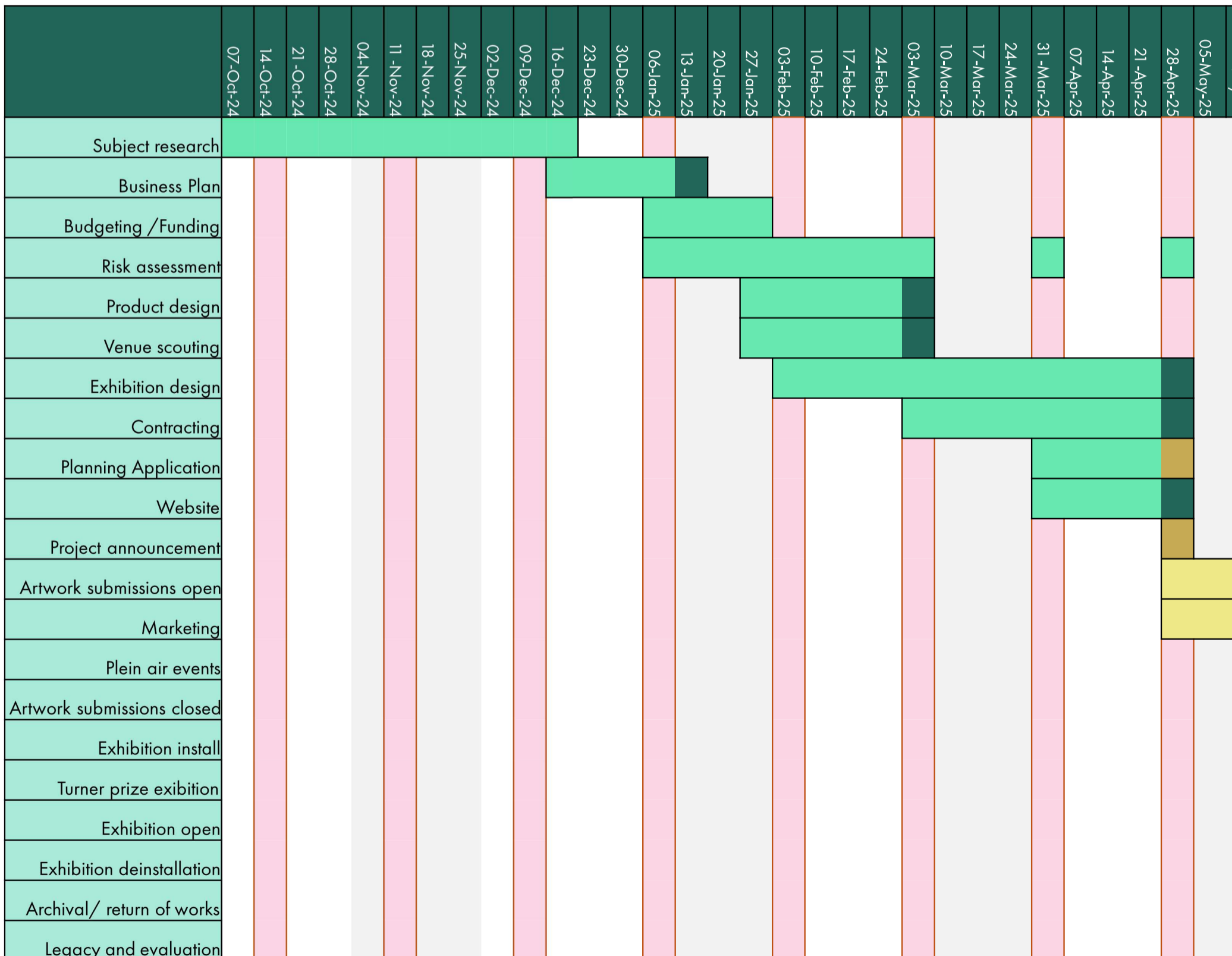
Further exploration and interviews into the call out finds that 57.4% of applicants received degree level education or equivalent. What this suggests about people who apply for the award is that this is a common way for creatives to fund their projects. While having the association and funding to develop a project positively supports artists, I would like to put forward that this contributes to the competitive stigma of CCI.

Market Strategy

As the business is built on progressive ideas of supporting artists and protecting human creativity as a valued trait, it must also project these themes on its branding and marketing.

Language must be sympathetic yet presented with conviction, to ensure artists feel secure working with us. Graphically, it must feature familiar imagery to artists and allude to arts and crafts, such as painting tools, stationary and artistic marks.

It is key that marketing is implemented in locations where artists frequent most. In physical space this means in art galleries, art shops, libraries and even schools. Online, the use of social media and websites will be used to provide an accessible way for people to find more information and details about the business if interested. Posts on these digital spaces will be search engine optimised to provide a wide enough outreach to attract people around the world.



Monitoring

The Gantt Chart below illustrates how I will monitor tasks and events throughout the year, and evaluate what actions need to be taken. Since I aim for them to last for the duration of a year, this could be scalable to reoccur annually.

The chart also includes when risk assessments are taken via weekly reviews, to ensure that the business remains viable and operable.

To coincide with the turner prize exhibition, where a lot of attention on the arts in Bradford will be, it is mapped onto the chart to optimise marketing plans.

Key

- Active period
- Internal deadlines
- Public engagement
- Public deadline
- Weekly review
- Turner prize

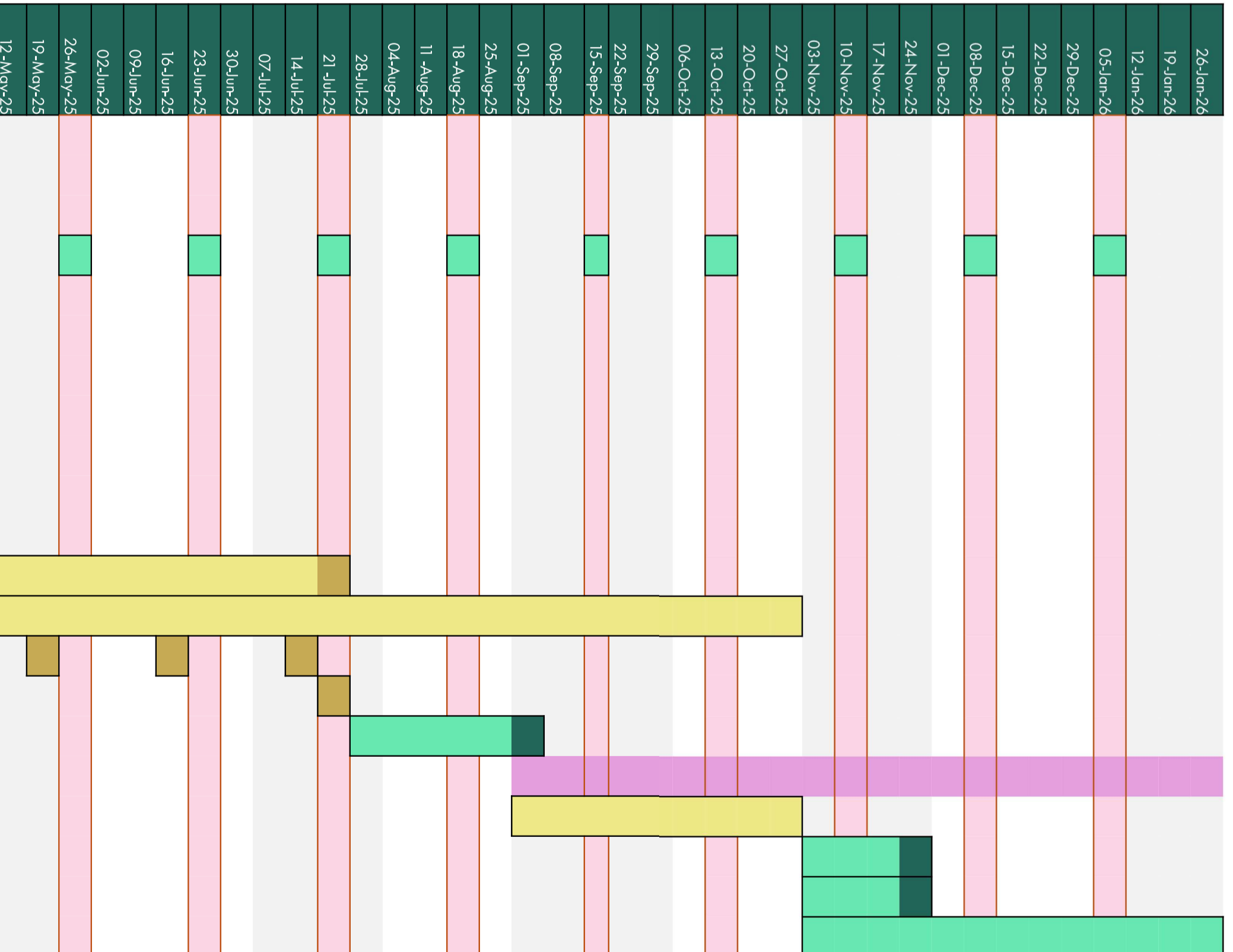


Figure 12 - Sketch by Iman Amjid



Figure 11 - Sketch by Kelvin Chan



Feasibility Study

To gain insight into how the business may function, a small controlled event was held which brought people into the outdoors to capture the city landscape.

The preparations for the event included a small presentation about my intentions for this event, stemming from the plain air impressionist artist and their philosophies, as well as introduction the initial business

aims, which were geared more towards improving mental health. This departure to my current goal still allows for that, but aligns more with my personal aims of supporting artists by uplifting what they do best.

Overall, the test event was successful and I was able to extrapolate a lot of useful information from it to analyse and study.

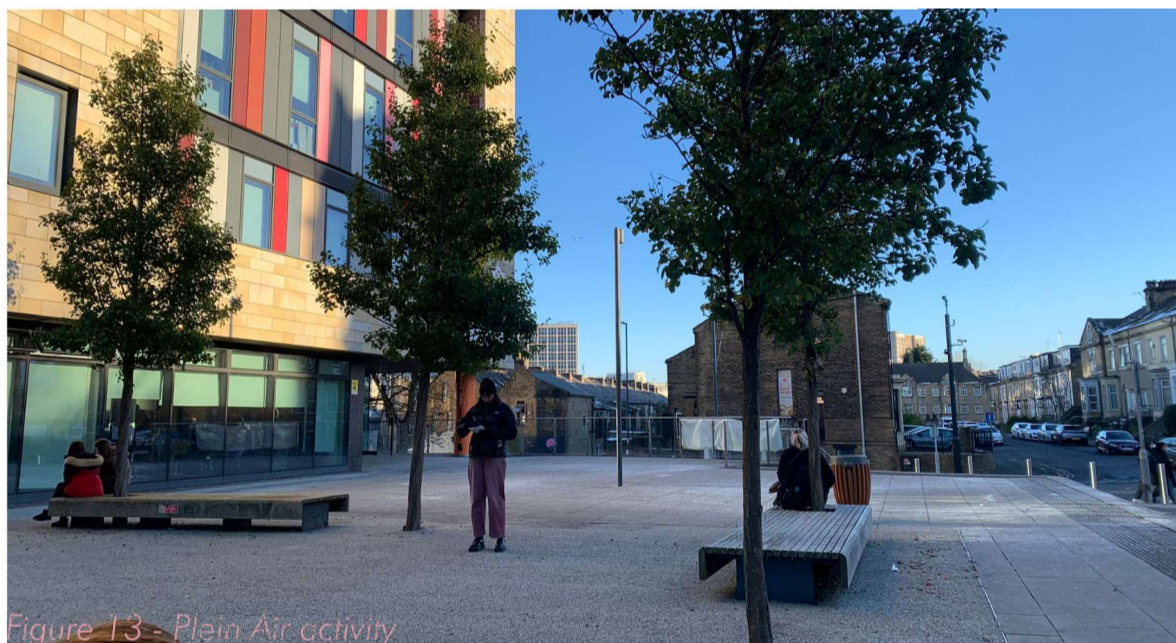


Figure 13 - Plein Air activity

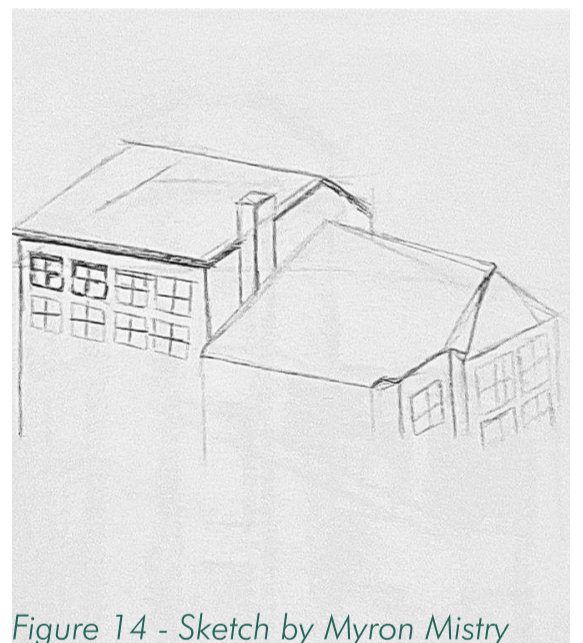


Figure 14 - Sketch by Myron Mistry

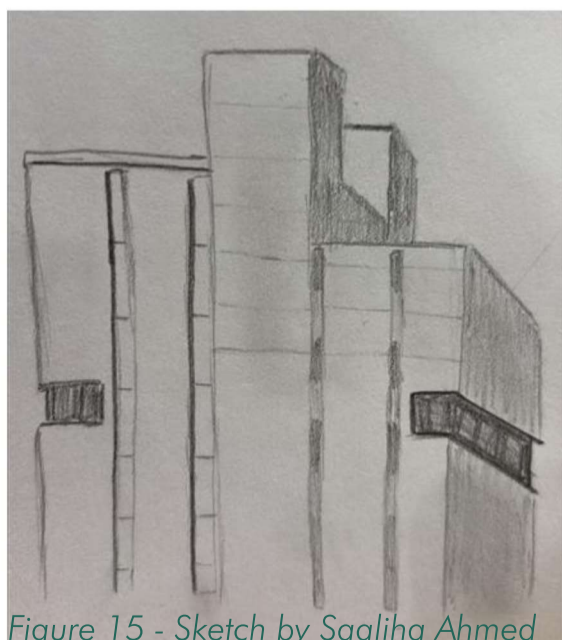


Figure 15 - Sketch by Saaliha Ahmed



Figure 16 - Sketch by Isabel Booth



Figure 17 - Plein Air activity

SWOT Analysis

The test provided many answers to important questions which pertained to how a group of young, creative people would engage with the programme of Plein Sight. Due to this test event, I am able to pick out the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of my business as they currently stand.

Mainly, people not engaging with the business is the common problem that I must keep questioning, providing solutions and contingencies for them. This ensures that the operation of the business is viable and safe to run.

Strength

- Plein air sessions allowed people to be present in their moment and observe their environment, where they otherwise wouldn't.
- Sessions and exhibition will encourage artists to network and socialise.
- Mental health increase, people valued the sense of being present drawing gave them.
- Gives a platform for less fortunate or inexperienced artists to break into the creative industry.

Weaknesses

- Accessibility of plein air sessions can be limited due to the weather, seating and general comfort, which would be a major negative to someone.
- Peoples' negative perception of own art can make it difficult to engage people who don't usually draw.
- The many strands of the business may be confusing for some.
- Method of equal compensation can be controversial, even contradictory if the benefits of participating don't exceed monetary incentives.

Opportunities

- Marketing events as a networking opportunity will attract new and inexperienced artists wanting to find work.
- Making a product which leverages its virality can spread the optics and impressions of the business to more people.
- Planning around seasons will give the business the chance to market it's activities in the run up to each event, increasing publicity and anticipation.
- Focus on smaller local communities can lead to the possibility of having branches of the business in different communities.

Threats

- People misinterpret the scheme, perpetuating the stigma and exclusivity of the arts as a luxury. This can be mitigated by using simple language and direct instructions.
- Submissions being unviable for installation and thus cannot be included. This is resolved by having a template or promising productions of exhibitions featuring different media.
- Safeguarding will be required for groups of any size. I will need to be properly trained to work with people and children, keep them safe.

Budget & Finance

Plein Air Sketching Sessions Estimated Costings 2024-25

1 hour minimum wage (April 2025) = **£12.21**
 4 hour = 1 hour travel + 2 hour drawing sessions + 1 hour breaks = **£48.84**
 Additional activities = Food + Local transport = **£50**
 Capacity (maximum) = 20
 Price of participation = $98.84 / 20 = \mathbf{£4.942} = \mathbf{£5}$

Considerations & Compromises

Both calculations are taking into account internal resources I have available at Bradford 2025 and standardised statistics where possible, such as minimum wage, average wages and so on.

If for the exhibition, sitters were hired, this total would equal £3878.4, which would push the total expenditure past the forecast budget. This is one of the compromises that would have to be made in order to stay within the viable budget available.

Exhibition Budgeting, with a budget of £10000

Artwork handling & collation = Postage x Number of Artworks = $12.12 \times 100 = \mathbf{£1,212}$
 Lighting = **£800**
 Fabrication = design structure + materials (mount board, wood, etc) = **£2,500**
 Installation = hourly rate for construction for 5 weeks = $((14 \times 8) \times 5) \times 5 = \mathbf{£2,800}$
 Exhibition Sitters/ maintenance = volunteer work = **£0**
 Digital Rigging = technology + software + install = **£750**
 Opening Day = Invites, transport, production = **£800**
 Marketing = **£1,500**
 Contingency = 10% of budget (£10,000) = **£1,000**
 Total = $1212 + 800 + 2500 + 2800 + 0 + 750 + 800 + 1000 = \mathbf{£9,862}$

Arts Council England:

An organisation set up to help develop the arts and cultural sector in England. It is funded by the government and the lottery.

- **NPO** - National Portfolio Organisation: A prestigious funder, supporting through grants, connections and collaboration. A 2 - 3 year long process before funding is agreed.
- **NLPG** - National Lottery Project Grants: Aims to focus its support on freelancers, social & community projects, and cultural organisations.

Key fund

Born from the ashes of the coal and steel industries in 1999, Key Fund provides support for businesses from the midlands to the borders of Scotland through investment. They directly focus on businesses with a clear social mission as such to grow and benefit the wider community.

Funding

These are potential and viable ways I can fund and develop my business

Trusts & Foundations

These describe legal entities that holds a portion of assets or wealth, for the specific intent, to use it for charitable purposes. Foundations can be trusts but can also be limited companies, social enterprises, partnerships etc. but they do not need to be charities.

Curator space

While not directly funders, CuratorSpace aims to make managing creative productions easier, from exhibitions, galleries, call outs and submissions. They'll be an essential reference point when considering how I integrate public relations into my business.

Review

Safeguarding is a top priority when taking people out into public areas. DBS checks to ensure minors are safe and appropriately accounted for.

Weather would cause accessibility issues for the majority of people, causing discomfort during outdoor events. Thus, events will be planned around warmer weather, targeting late spring/early summer (May - July). This would give enough time for the on-going call out and the development of the exhibition to showcase both works en plein air and general entries.

General public may be reluctant on the messages of the business, perhaps going to the extent of being radical and avant-garde. However, this provides an opportunity of having "message champions," such as well-known artists and local figures, participating in the business's programme. This aims to ease public perceptions of art and human creativity as something we should protect and sustain.

Above all else, if engagement is low, the contingency plan will involve the business centring around my personal creative journey into plein air art, and the exhibition will still focus on community participation.

Risks and Regulations

Statement of Viability

The company 'Plein Sight' centred around introducing creativity back into the public will be a viable business because:

1. There is an increasing need to support artists, now more than ever. As long as artists feel valued and the company creates a space for collaboration and communication, the business will be a net positive for creative industries.
2. The method of delivery has been trialled and tested, with feedback given on how it can be run at a professional standard. That is to say that the trial session has proved that a third of the programme is functional and more importantly enjoyable under the corrected circumstances.
3. All artwork submissions being credited and featured in an exhibition will provide a clear incentives for new and current artists, with the appropriate validations in place. With the additional aid of funders that will support the project, the business can further support artists and the creative industry.

Projections & Actions

In a year...

I hope to have submitted a business proposal that is concise, accurate and direct, for funding appraisal. This will hopefully kick-start the beginning of the business and the emergence of a more creative presence with society

In 2 years...

The first of many programmed years will have just finished, taking place within Bradford. This including several plein air sessions being lead by me and other artists; the call out, which will hopefully have many participants; which should all conclude in an exhibition showcasing the artwork produced in these sessions.

In 5 years...

Four more cycles of the structured year will have taken place since the first one and in areas outside of Bradford. I will have or be developing a product which will aid in the practice of plein air sketching, while also developing the brand identity of the business.

In 10 years...

Several branches will be operational throughout the UK, potentially even abroad. I hope that the product developed has become synonymous with the brand's identity and other mediums and art forms are included within the programme. Above all else, I hope to have changed the perception of human creativity.

Up Coming Actions

1. Pragmatically explore the act of plein air sketching, to understand what is needed in order to practice it as well as considerations I will need to account for.
2. Begin initial designs for the physical and marketable product that will assist in the practice of plein air sketching.
3. Continue and arrive at resolutions for the exhibition space, taking into account different sites and contexts.
4. Explore different funding avenues and evaluate the right one for the business.
5. Create and develop marketing materials for the business.

Current Creative Progress

Initial ideas

Here are some early iterations of the exhibition design. One thematic inclusions that guided me through the beginning stages were the site itself, being Loading Bay, a Bradford 2025 exclusive venue. Another consideration was how to include the local area in the design.

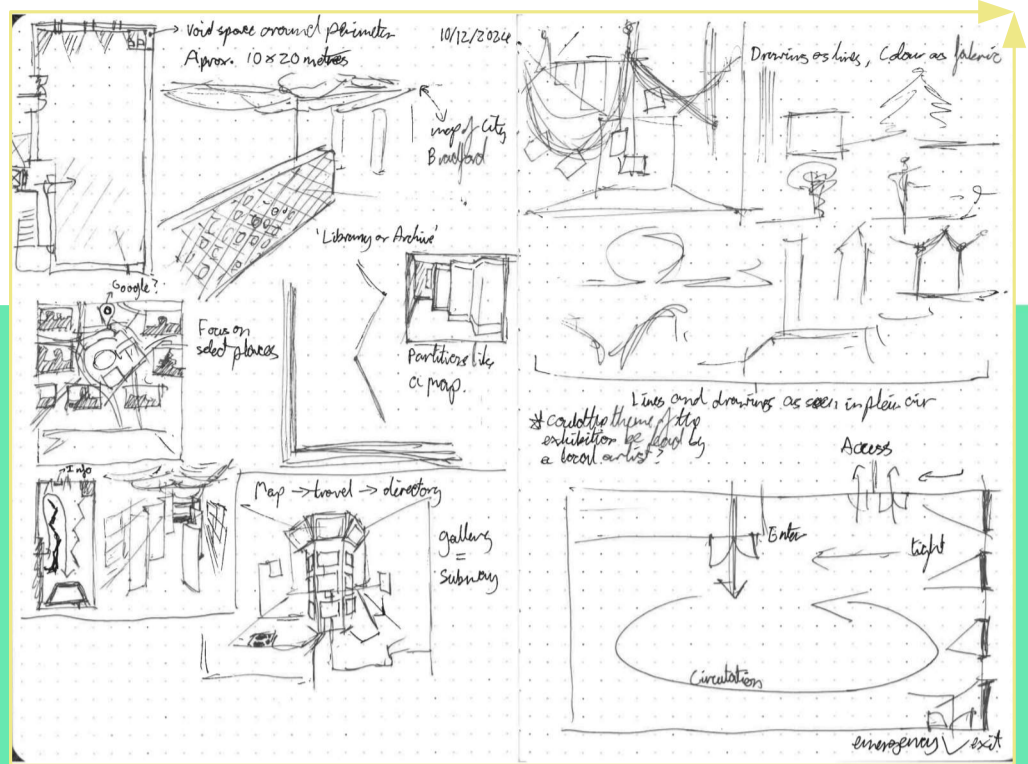


Figure 18 - Initial Exhibition Design 1

I mainly borrowed the skylines of Bradford as visual language to represent that the city is a vital part of community.

It was a high priority to investigate how a person or viewer would interact with and experience the space. My approach whenever designing a space is to assume the position of the conscious viewer in a space. What will the viewer see? What would they like to do? Why? How will they do it? These are the questions I will be answering at this stage of the process, which is also a prime opportunity to integrate inclusion and accessibility through out its creation.

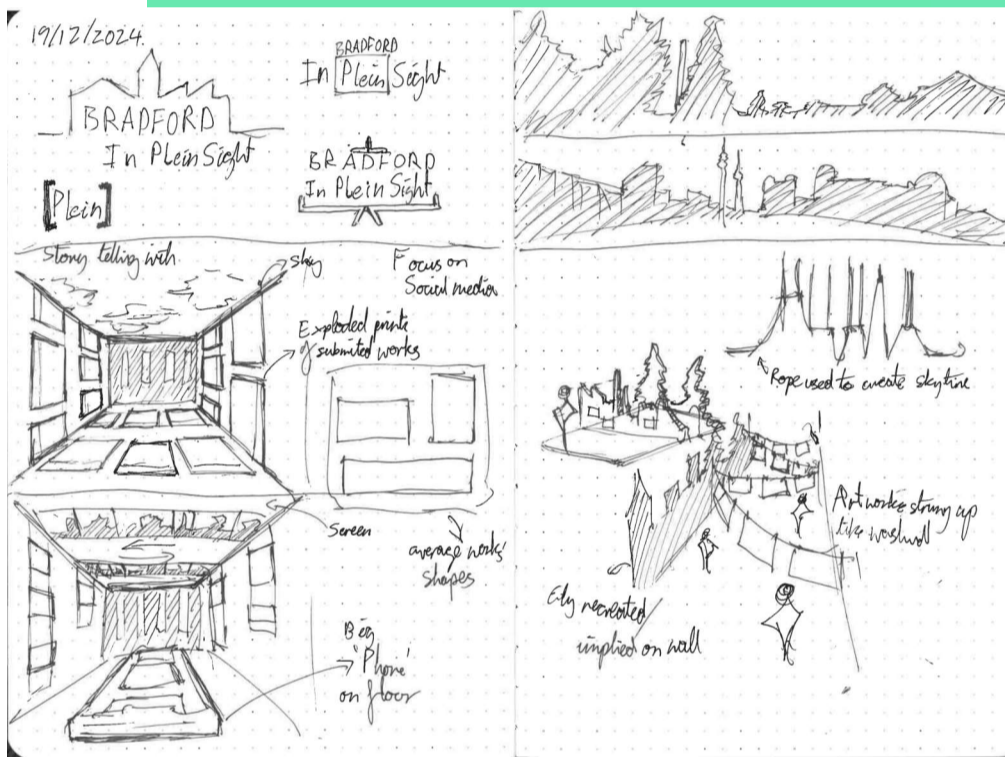


Figure 19 - Initial Exhibition Design 2

3D Modelling

Using CAD (computer aided design) within the design process helps make accurate and rapid actions, while never taking away creative decisions or directions. All inputs are intentional and helps provide useful visuals to guide external contributors.

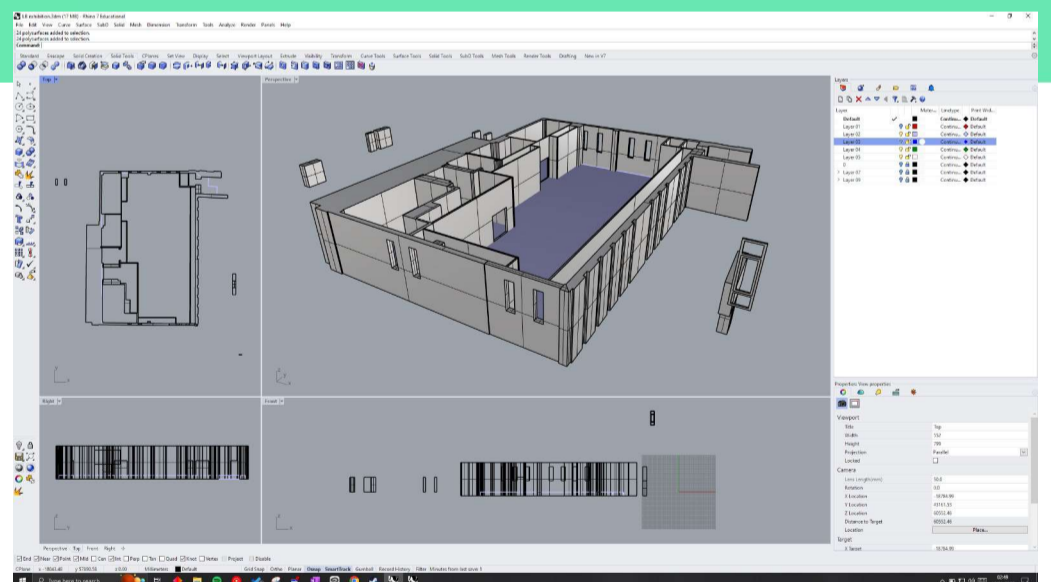
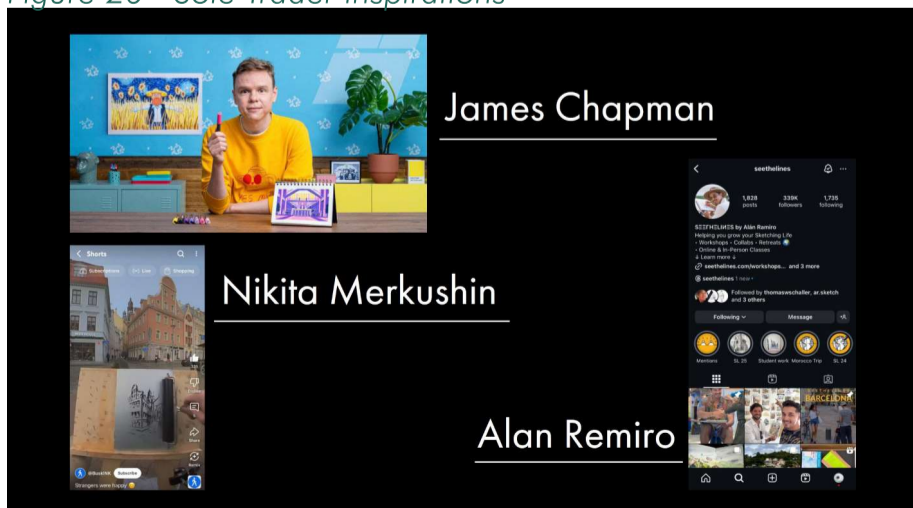


Figure 19 - Initial Exhibition Design 2

Figure 20 - Sole Trader inspirations



Experimenting

In my pitch presentation, I mentioned that a select few artists provided inspiration for making art of environments and landscapes. I would like to try different methods of making art while observing a space, allowing the business to cater to other creatives.

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