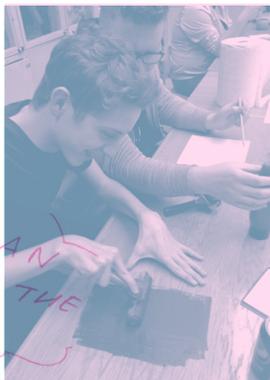




Supported by Heritage Lottery Fund, The Harris Transformers is a programme that aims to increase youth engagement with the Harris' rich heritage in the heart of Preston as its museum, library and gallery are re-imagined. It is delivered by Blaze, a youth-led organisation with a strong track record of work across Lancashire developing the next generation of cultural producers, leaders and artists.

The Harris Transformers, aged 16-25, have been challenging traditional practice, interviewing staff members, sharing stories of Heritage, making research trips to other museums, influencing architectural plans and more.

This zine represents the hard work of the group over a 10 week period. With sessions led by artist Hannah Whitlow and print studio Dizzy Ink the work involved in this publication is a catalogue of participants experiences of the Harris. The first publication is a series of interviews with people who work in the Harris, the second is a photographic essay about the details in the museum and with the final is a pull-out set of illustrations created by participants on the workshop.



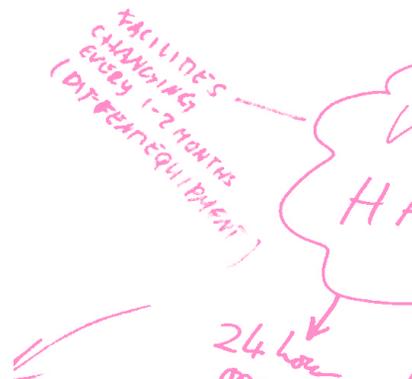
## Project Manager

*What have you learnt from the Harris transformers?*

I've have learnt about heritage, the way museums operate and the changes necessary to ensure the building and programme can become as user friendly to young people as possible. I hope that this project will be the catalyst for further youth development at the Harris and that the Harris will continue to commit to embedding young people at a strategic level.

*What would you have done differently?*

I would have got more members of the Harris staff team involved right at the beginning of the project. They're involvement is now growing which is great!



# Workshop Participant

*Why did you want to get involved in the Harris transformers project?*

I got involved with the Harris Transformers so that I could be part of a big change in Preston. I wanted to know that I had helped to shape a decision that will impact the future of the City and for all visitors of the Museum.

*What have you learnt from the Harris transformers?*

I'd like to think that I've given a voice to many people of the same age who won't necessarily get to have their say. Hopefully my time and effort will mean a more exciting Harris!

meetings

(Harris Transformers)



# Workshop Facilitator

*Why did you want to facilitate the Harris transformers?*

I wanted to join the Harris transformers because I am passionate about young people having their voices heard in decision-making processes. It is vital for young peoples development to engage in live projects and take ownership. I wanted the group to gain confidence and feel invested in the Harris, which now, I'm proud to say, I think they all do!

*What have you learnt from the Harris transformers?*

I have learnt a lot about how to facilitate a large group and feel I have grown as a practitioner alongside the participants. I've enjoyed structuring creative workshops and facilitating the group's engagement with the Harris. Mostly I have discovered more about the heritage of Preston and the Harris which has been fascinating.

# Front of house

*What do the public ask you most about when they come to the harris?*

Currently I think they are asking me about the proposed plans for the changes to building, also they ask general questions about the history of the museum and about the collections.

*What would you like to see changing?*

I like the proposed plans for the entrance to the building. I think it would be great if we get the funding for that. I would also like to see more contemporary art exhibitions and would love for the collections to change more often.

*What do you think about having music on?*

We did that one-day, we put some music on, I think it was nice; it was calming and gave it a nice atmosphere. I think perhaps not everyday, maybe at certain times, because sometimes it feels really quiet.

Skills  
WORKSHOPS



# Local Councillor

*Why do you think it's important to change the Harris?*

The Harris is a wonderful place it's been the centre of the city for hundred and twenty years as the city's museum library and art gallery however the world is changing, people are changing, society is changing, I think that the Harris needs to change and develop in light of people's different needs and expectations. And so that is why at this moment in time, the two councils, have brought me in. I work with the Harris Transformers, and the team for all the people that live in Preston and Lancashire.

*Why were you so keen to get young people involved in the project?*

Because the Harris has been here for 120 years if we are successful in bringing in the investment it's likely to be the biggest piece of investment for the another 50, 60 even 70 years. We need to talk to people about what they want not just now but in five or ten or fifteen years, because the younger generation will be the family's of the future who will be coming back to use us.

Also the other thing is that things have changed so much in the last 10/15 years. It's now a digital age, which young people have grown up in and people over thirty or forty haven't and therefore have a very different perspective on life.

*What do you think is the main thing that needs changing about the Harris?*

I think a number of things need to change: we need to make the building more welcoming, both physically and emotionally. So we need to try and open the building. A lot of people have said to me they find it dark and forbidding, they find it difficult to get into. So we need to do that, we need to make the building more animated, more vibrant, more activities, events, and things going on, to attract all ranges of people but particularly young people.

I think we have to forget about all the boundaries we have, we don't worry about whether it's a museum or library, people want spaces where they can relax, where they can have experiences and enjoy themselves.



# Director, the Harris

*Can you see youth groups or young people taking part in the Harris's Future?*

Absolutely. It helps us direct it, if we are successful we are going to have interactive areas, and spaces for youth groups to work and make their own art. I want to see a gallery, a section for young people to display their work and to invite more local, young artists. In The Harris Open lots of creatives apply, young people are the ones this building needs to last longer than the next fifteen to twenty years.

We will use young people in consultation, if we are successful, we want young people to be involved in all of the changes to The Harris.

*Have you got any short term plans?*

We want to invite youth groups to come together, we'll provide a studio and a space and let's do something. It doesn't take a lot of resources to create work; it's just a commitment.

The Harris set out to be a place of learning, education, stimulation and challenge. It has to be a place for young people to exhibit art; it can't be a dingy old building. We have to respect all the people that come in and use the building.

Hundreds and thousands of books are here from as far back as the 19th Century. We want to invite people to come, have a coffee and learn from all of our resources.

We are just developing the harris app, and as you walk around the space it will pop up to tell you more about the collections. The future is really exciting for The Harris!



FACILITIES  
CHANGING  
every 1-2 MONTHS  
(DIFFERENT EQUIPMENT)

2  
9

