

# case study

Wordz Out  
Nottingham Castle  
Museum & Art Gallery



## location:

Nottingham

## young people:

eleven young people aged 16-21 years and over fifty other young people aged 8-19yrs who supported the project as extras and interviewees. The majority of the group were recruited by the NCMG Outreach Officer and the Wordz Out Project Team through flyer advertising, personal contact, via advocates in the community and a recruitment event at the Castle.

## context:

Nottingham Castle is a key heritage site within the East Midlands, combining heritage, collections and a vibrant temporary exhibition programme. It has a national reputation for its exhibitions programme and for its work in audience development and interpretation. As described in the overall projects context, The Castle has experience of projects work with young people, but is keen to explore ways of embedding this practice into policy and practice across the whole of NCMG.

**project summary: Wordz Out**

The project aimed to gain a real insight into what barriers and issues young African Caribbean people experienced living in Nottingham. The starting point was 'Pressure', an exhibition at Nottingham Castle of work by the leading black photographer and film maker Horace Ove. The young people also watched Horace Ove's film 'Pressure' at the Broadway cinema. They also met Horace and discussed his – and their – experiences of being young and African Caribbean. From these inspirations the group worked with Marie Shaw the Nottingham Museums Outreach Officer, storyteller Panya Banjoko and film maker Jes Hill.

The film makers (young people) are Shekinah Griffith, Asha Banjoko, Amani Banjoko, Casman Banjoko, Laura Summers, Sarah McGoldrick, Ventrola Wilson, Kenisha Lowe and Shadrach Pennant

During the project young people met, interviewed and filmed a number of individuals and groups across the city and in Jamaica. They developed a critical voice around what they saw as the issues young black people faced and what they wanted to change about how they were perceived, including how Museums & Galleries could support this process. The results of the young people's exploration into film making and the creative words were seven films that reveal the diversity of Black talent, experiences and achievements in Nottingham. They show us that the black community is not one homogenous group but a mix of many people; Bajans, Jamaicans, Black British and mixed race.

**specific project aims:**

- Explore with young people, the barriers that prevent them engaging with museums, galleries and contemporary art
- Develop good practice by including young people in aspects of museums and galleries policy and programming in a sustainable way

- Create good working relationships between the partner organisations

**summary of activities:**

- Created a group of young people with diverse experiences and backgrounds and started relationships between the gallery and the participants, and amongst the participants themselves, which have been sustained (this was not a pre-existing group)
- Explored representation of black people using work of Jamaican photographer / film-maker, Horace Ove, as inspiration
- Developed the young people's practical skills in filmmaking, acting, digital photography and the creative word in all of its forms
- Developed discussion and social skills amongst the group, within the community, with gallery staff and artists
- Horace gave YP tour of 'Pressure' exhibition.
- YP participated in post screen discussion of the film, 'Pressure', with Horace (Broadway cinema)
- YP toured Nottingham with Horace to give their perspective of Black heritage issues
- Visited Newstead Abbey to see how Black people from its history are represented
- Worked with film-maker and wordsmith to create 'Wordz Out' films representing YP's views about Black heritage and culture
- Young people discovered how museums and art galleries and their staff operate
- Involved all gallery staff at Nottingham Castle and informed their approach to their work with regard to attracting and involving young people
- Encouraged participants to apply for a volunteer placement at Nottingham Castle
- Invited to preview Wordz Out at UCG cinema as part of NOW Contemporary Arts Festival
- The preview of the Wordz Out film created a high number of requests for copies and is now being used by social services, youth workers, schools, Black arts organisations – looking at Black issues, dual heritage, etc

- 200 copies distributed by request, further copies being produced to satisfy demand
- Additional showcasing of the film requested by Councillors, Social Services and Schools.
- 3 participants have presented the project to wider audiences (en-vision Seminar, community newspapers, BBC Blast, BBC Radio Nottingham interview, en-vision National Conference)

**time-scale:** April – October 2004 with the majority of contact with young people from May – October

### **summary of project outcomes:**

Explore with young people, the barriers that prevent them engaging with museums, galleries and contemporary art:

- Young people (YP) visited the Pressure Exhibition at Nottingham Castle, Newstead Abbey, Broadway Cinema showing of Horace Ove's films, The V&A in London and the home of artist and writer Ray Shell at Newstead Abbey
- YP met a number of key black artists, members of exhibition staff at Nottingham Castle as well as interviewing members of the wider community
- YP discussed issues young black people faced and explored whether these had changed since the time of the Black Power Movements and the Race Riots of the 1960s
- They were able to reflect on the value museums and galleries had in supporting or hindering these issues. They were able to provide critical analysis and observations on how museums and galleries could develop
- YP's expectations of museum and galleries were challenged

Develop good practice in including young people in aspects of museums and galleries policy and programming in a sustainable way:

- The young participants were involved in all the decision making on the project
- YP made aware that their views were important to us

- One of the YP is currently developing a Young Roots bid with the support of NCMG Outreach Officer
- One YP has been a volunteer for the museum service over a period of 3 months
- YP from the Wordz Out and the Angel Row Gallery Way In Way Out project ran a joint mini-workshop / presentation at the en-vision training seminar, Leicester.
- Young people from the Wordz Out project will be running a workshop / presentation at the engage one day conference 'Consult! In Manchester on 13th June 2005

Create good working relationships between the partner organisations:  
See Way In Way Out

Embedding a youth friendly culture:

- Participants feel that there is the potential for their voice to be recognised
- All participants will be targeted in any mailing regarding the development of a youth panel (combined with the participants on the Way In, Way Out project)
- The experience and knowledge staff have gained will go forward in the planning and promotion of future activities across NCMG as well as through the dissemination of the films
- Staff have increased their knowledge and awareness of other initiatives and approaches in the sector to access, marketing and programming
- Staff now have a thorough understanding of the policy-based considerations of working with young people, as described in Way In Way Out
- Staff on a range of levels have experienced a positive relationship with young people and now have first hand experience to draw upon
- The gallery now has a pool of interested young people who have already taken up opportunities for volunteering and employment
- The Films are a professional product containing evidence with which to advocate for the needs of young people to future stakeholders
- Jes Hill (film maker) has provided two

training sessions on working with young people and film making for Museum & Gallery staff and local artists. There was a high take-up and satisfaction rate with these sessions and they will be continued.

**success factors:**

See overall case study

**challenges**

See overall case study

**outcomes for young people:**

Developed new skills in;

- Using technical equipment, digital / SLR cameras and video recorders, design and production processes and timetabling
- Recording and editing information, working within a professional recording studio
- Discussing and communicating information

Also;

- Development of confidence and self-esteem
- Enthusiasm for the arts and culture / heritage
- Became 'informed' museum visitors, able to positively critique exhibitions / interpretation
- Able to articulate their own stories / issues and appreciate those of other cultures
- Understanding their views are important to society

Increased awareness of;

- The resources available within Nottingham City Museums & Galleries
- Cultural venues in two cities and how they work
- Contemporary film making and music production
- Own ideas around art through the inspiration of working with other artists

Feedback from the young people was very positive;

- Individuals commented on the positives of social relationships and teamwork
- All the YP who attended the launch expressed intense pride
- Individuals have subsequently extended their contact with the gallery through use of resources, help and advice from staff, volunteer placement
- A quote from one YP "first museum experience, I thought museums were just photos, paintings, yes it's given me a different idea of what museums can offer"

**outcomes for partner organisation's:**

See overall case study

**outcomes for the gallery:**

See overall case study

**what next?**

- Distribution of Wordz Out Films including the additional documentary of the making of project 'Views Behind the Wordz' locally and nationally
- An additional showcasing of the film requested by Councillors, Social Services and Schools along with the preview of the documentary 'Views behind the Wordz'
- Lessons learned will inform programme development

See also overall case study

More information from Jo Kemp at [jok@ncmg.demon.co.uk](mailto:jok@ncmg.demon.co.uk)