

ABOUT ABERDEEN?

# UP FLAG WHAT WOULD YOU

## ABOUT US

We're Flag Up, a group of six creative practitioners brought together by Look Again Festival. We work in varying creative disciplines and have chosen to build our careers in Aberdeen, inspired by its great potential as a creative city.



**Steven Affleck** is an illustrator who is intrigued by the way people think. Influenced by comics and anime, he personifies his thoughts on social and cultural issues.

@ stevenaffleck



**Madeleine Edwards** is an illustrator and designer creating colourful, accessible work for anyone to enjoy.

@ madeleinedwards



**Isla Goldie's** photos bare the souls of the people and places she sees. She loves sunrises and abstracts.

@ islagoldie



**Shirin Karbor** is an illustrator and designer with an affinity for drawing characters. Inspired by Japanese ink, pop art and comics, her style features a lively mix of bold lines, movement and humour.

@ shirinsdoodles



**Ruth Kirby Organ** is a maker of bold shapes, fun patterns and likes the challenge of working on large scale physical outputs.

@ kirbyorgan\_



**Becky Orlinski** is an illustrator and designer with a love of portraits and peach tones.

@ beckyorlinski

# FIND US

## THE ROOF GARDEN AT ST NICHOLAS

14.06.18 - 17.06.18

## OUR MICRO RESIDENCY

We've been working together as part of a micro-residency programme under the mentorship of Marc Cairns from Pidgin Perfect.

Pidgin Perfect is an award winning creative consultancy working internationally on a wide range of projects creating connections between people and place.

To begin the residency, Hatch Aberdeen hosted a kick off event. We heard from a range of creatives working with communities around the UK including Look Again, Leith Late and Build Up London.

These stories and perspectives were invaluable for the second part of the day: a placemaking workshop created and facilitated by Marc Cairns. Here we started to explore the importance of arts and culture in Aberdeen and how it contributes to improve the places we value.

We started to build our project brief and discussed Aberdeen's identity and connectivity, which turned into our project's major theme.

Another part of the residency took us to Skene Square Primary, where we hosted a workshop for the pupils to create their own flags. The pupils used a similar process to ours, by taking shapes from their school and the surrounding areas to create their own flags out of paper. These flags have now been produced and are flying in the Roof Garden at St Nicholas alongside the rest!



More recently, Marc invited us to visit him in Glasgow to explore different creative spaces and galleries.

Our first stop was Many Studios, a shared working space in Glasgow's Barras district. It is now home to retail spaces, galleries and over 60 studios. We also visited the Whisky Bond, a space for designers, makers, artists and creative businesses.

This trip was insightful because as a group, we feel strongly about Aberdeen nurturing its creative scene and talent.

### WITH THANKS TO:

Braw Wee Emporium, Build Up London, David Dale Gallery, Design and Code, Glasgow Women's Library, Hatch Aberdeen, Leith Late, Made Brave, Skene Square Primary, The Whisky Bond.





# ABOUT OUR FLAGS

We've spoken to people across Aberdeen to find out what it means to live here; what makes people proud and what they dream of for the city.

We've gathered these voices and turned them into flags that will fly on the Rooftop Garden. Visit and reflect on the ongoing discussion about Aberdeen's identity.

In order to gather these opinions, we wanted anyone to get involved. We started by speaking to people we knew, then reached out to people we didn't, taking photos on the way. We also set up our website ([flagupaberdeen.co.uk](http://flagupaberdeen.co.uk)) where people could anonymously type their honest thoughts.

Thank you to everyone who got involved, and to everyone who is about to!

# QUOTES WE LOVE

**"WHY ARE SO MANY HERE RISK ADVERSE?"** **"BEACH IS RIGHT ON THE CITIES DOORSTEP"** **"THE HIGH ST IS ALL BOOKIES AND POUND SHOPS"** **"GRIT AND GLINT"** **"EVERYTHING IS A BLANK CANVAS OF GRANITE AND CONCRETE"** **"DISHEARTENED CITY WITH A VIBRANT SOUL"** **"REJUVENATE CITY CENTRE"** **"CITY BLENDS IN WITH THE CLOUDS ON A GREY DAY, BUT GENUINELY SHIMMERS ON A SUNNY DAY"** **"GRANITE, GRAINS, GRASS AND GULLS"** **"WHY IS NOBODY SAYING ANYTHING POSITIVE, IT'S A GREAT CITY WITH GREAT PEOPLE"** **"ABERDEEN HAS LOTS GOING ON IN CULTURE, ART AND MUSIC, BUT IS NOT DOING A JOB IN ADVERTISING IT!"** **"I THINK ABERDEEN NEEDS TO BE MORE AWARE OF THE CULTURALLY DIVERSE MINORITY GROUPS WITHIN THE CITY"** **"EX-OILY - IS OIL DEAD??"** **"I HAD A POSITIVE SURPRISE WHEN I CAME TO LIVE HERE!"** **"I WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE LIVE MUSIC IN ABERDEEN. ABERDEEN'S MUSIC SCENE 20 YEARS AGO WAS AMAZING"** **"OKAY FIRST AND LAST, I CALL IT ABERDREAM! - GREAT PEOPLE, HEARTWARMING SMILES, KIND"** **"NEW INCENTIVES NEEDED TO ENCOURAGE GROWTH"** **"HOW LOVELY THE PEOPLE ARE WITHIN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRY! MAKES ME PROUD TO BE A PART OF"**

ADD YOUR OWN!

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"So many unused spaces that could be used for creative opportunities and community projects. Art is the New-Oil!!"  
Kara Shepherd



"Carnivals."  
Layla Goldie



"Exploring with my dog."  
Evan Adamson



"Feeling of infinity on the beach."  
Lisa Hummel



"The Granite City"  
Josh Moverley



"Preserve and celebrate our heritage!"  
Fiona Jane Brown



"Easy access to parks, rivers, the sea and greenspace."  
Fiona Young

# FLAGS THIS WAY



## MAKE YOUR OWN FLAG UP BADGE!

Take this leaflet to the bandstand in the Rooftop Gardens and pick your design to cut.





# LOOK FOR THESE FLAGS



They are placed around the Rooftop Gardens... can you find them?

**MAKE YOUR OWN FLAG UP BADGE!**



## "ALL THE GOOD PEOPLE MOVE AWAY"

"Compared to other Scottish cities, there is a distinct lack of retention of our creative graduates. We found ourselves to be some of the few who decided to stay here after university, but in doing so we encountered difficulties in establishing ourselves as creatives in a city that, until recently, did little to nurture creative talent or offer affordable working spaces suitable for small creative start-ups. This situation is slowly changing, but we have a long way to go. There is potential for Aberdeen to be a creative hub if the right support is offered to those trying to start out." - Shirin



Shirin Karbor



Steven Affleck

"As a group I feel this is something we all could relate to as we have at moments felt the urge to leave Aberdeen as we felt that the city didn't provide a home for us in a grander sense.

People will always come and go which doesn't make it a bad thing but I feel the reason for people leaving is the problem. Aberdeen seems to chase people away where as it should be aiming to be a stepping stone, a port in the storm, part of the journey not something to flee from.

We need to invest in the people in this city so no matter where they go they feel that Aberdeen was part of them and they were part of it. I drew two versions of this concept as I felt that goodbyes aren't as simple as this quote makes them out to be." - Steven



Steven Affleck

## "WHY ARE SO MANY HERE SO RISK ADVERSE?"

"I feel this is so true about Aberdeen and the morale of the city. There is a feeling of deflation and pre-emptive defeat that floats through the streets.

In other cities I feel this is a drive for action and a DIY attitude that for some reason Aberdeen fails to nourish. To tackle this I decided to draw upon the tarot card the Tower which represents change, chaos, destruction and liberation. I feel that Aberdeen is risk adverse but it is only through failing that things can get better and the reward out ways the fear." - Steven



Steven Affleck

## "THE POTENTIAL OF THE HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE"

"Aberdeen needs to not only Look Again but look up. The architecture in our city is very sneaky as all people see is the façade of granite when if you look up you can see a secret history of the city unfold. It is in the skylines that you can see the subtle time differences in the buildings and the intricate designs, like the statues above the Wetherspoons at the end of Union Street.

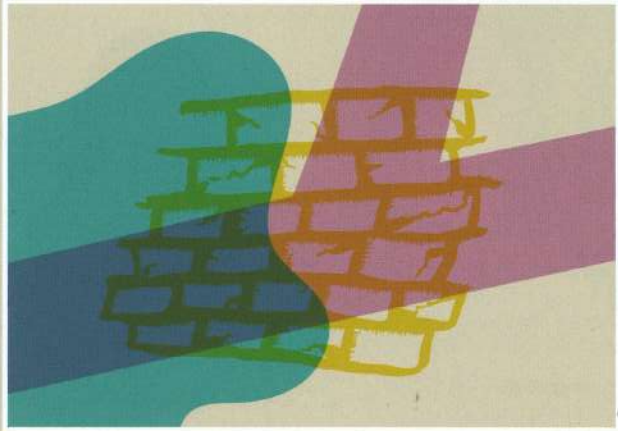
At first something so beautiful feels so out of place but they aren't, merely lost. I wanted to convey the beauty that Aberdeen has in its buildings so decided to draw Marischal College but made it floating in reference to looking to the skies but also an homage to the original Aberdeen flag with its floating castles." - Steven



## "COBBLED STREETS IN DISREPAIR"

"A nod to the quiet but distinct outrage about the lack of interest from local authorities to preserve certain places of historical interest, the most recent example being a crude addition of tarmac to the beautiful cobbled streets of Old Aberdeen and Windmill Brae."

Aberdeen's history must not be left to wilt." - Shirin

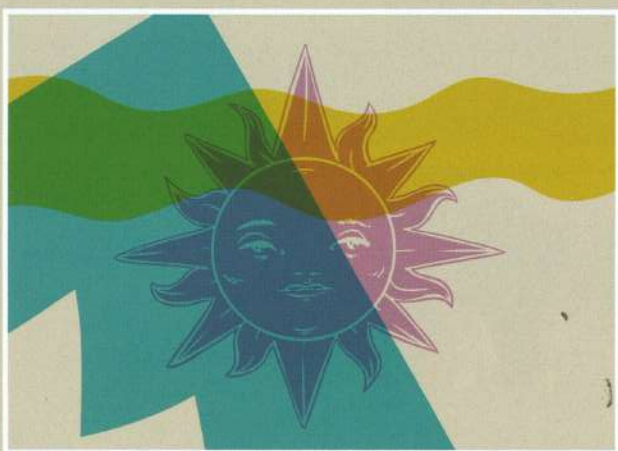


Shirin Karbor

## "THE GRANITE SPARKLES IN THE SUNSHINE"

"This quote spoke to me as it is so simple yet can be read with such hope and optimism, something which I feel can be lacking in our city sometimes."

But I feel this quote summaries the people of Aberdeen quite nicely, despite the hard, sometimes cold exterior there are little glimmers of hope and joy in us. I decided to visualise this by looking at medieval imagery to try and relate to the timelessness and history of granite within Aberdeen. Such pleasure can be drawn from opening yourself up to the little things." - Steven



Steven Affleck

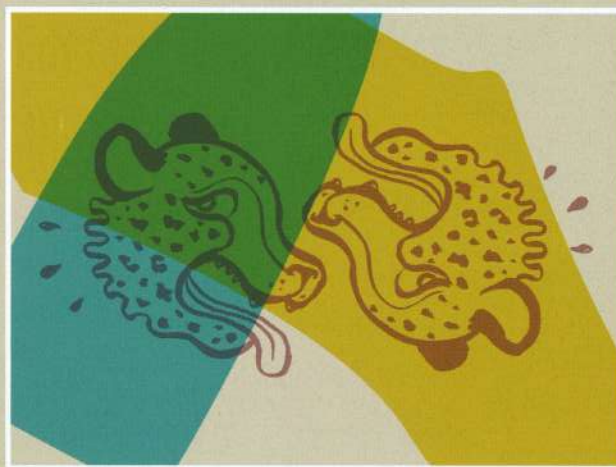


Steven Affleck

## "ABERDEEN IS A CITY FULL OF POTENTIAL FOR GREATNESS"

"Inspired by the iconic twin leopards on Aberdeen City's historic coat of arms, this illustration shows the powerful symbolic Aberdonian creature as an interpretation of our feelings towards the city's economic climate - dynamic, yet in a state of distress."

The movement and multiple limbs protruding from the leopard are an observation of the recent turmoil felt since the downturn of the oil and gas industry, and the need to take action towards diversifying our skills to ensure a sustainable future for our city." - Shirin



Shirin Karbor



## "IDENTITY CRISIS"

"The historical leopard from the city's coat of arms makes another appearance, this time facing a reflection of itself with turmoil and surprise."

This leopard continues the observation of the city's lost identity as an international centre of wealth and excellence for oil and gas. This identity now seems to be challenged and the city has realised it needs to reconsider how it portrays itself after the unstable economic climate.

We are seeing constant initiative and the strong desire to move away from a singular face/identity, showing the world that Aberdeen is a city with the potential to become a diverse and flexible environment for talent to grow in more than one industry." - Shirin



Shirin Karbor



Steven Affleck



## "WISH PEOPLE WOULD OPEN UP MORE"

"In the early stages of this project we collectively acknowledged that Aberdeen has a problem with communication and connectivity, and it kept coming up in our findings when we spoke to people. A lot of people in the city want the same things yet for some reason they are trying to do it by themselves."

It takes a village, or in this case a city, to make real change. We need to stop isolating ourselves out of fear or pride, communication is vital to help move this city in the right direction otherwise we are going to be spinning in circles for years to come." - Steven



Steven Affleck

## "THE SORRY STATE OF UNION STREET"

"Everyone notices the modern weed that has popped up along most of the streets in this city, composed of two very lonely and empty words; To Let. I feel this is a huge problem for Aberdeen and one without an easy solution. But I feel we can start approaching this problem by tackling other issues raised by this project; communication, fear of risk, etc. The council and the people need to start putting in the work for change and it is a two way street. People need to start embracing local businesses and promote a vibe of welcoming and openness within the city otherwise we will have a ghost town of chains and franchises." - Steven

