



## DERBY VOICE

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Derby Cathedral



City exhibition aims to make voice of Derby's youth heard!

Work created by dozens of young Derby artists is taking centre stage in an innovative exhibition set to go live outside the city's cathedral this summer.

Involving nearly 300 young people from the city, who are creating murals, videos and audio installations, the event will address issues of exclusion and draw on the influence of contemporary issues such as the Black Lives Matter movement, mental health, education reform, employment opportunities, bullying, barriers to opportunities and LGBTQ+ rights.

Dr Rhiannon Jones, Artistic Researcher at the University, and CEO and Creative Director of S.H.E.D, said: **‘We are so thrilled to be able to stage this fascinating and thought-provoking event for the city. One of the many things that the pandemic has denied us is the chance to hear the voices of young people in our communities, particularly those for whom the isolation of lockdown has added to issues of identity and exclusion. We have also been able to offer seven S.H.E.D Artist Commissions to support talented young people from Derby and showcase their practice in a public context.**

**This research project responds to the need for creating a space for civic dialogue and social cohesion in relation to justice and protest in the UK. The objective of Derby Voice is to provide a platform to those young people in our city, to showcase their artistic talent and for their views on the issues that matter to them to be heard loud and clear.’**

Working with local organisations, the S.H.E.D team – staff and students from the University’s Interior Design programme – have designed the installation space for Derby Voice, just as they played a part in developing the S.H.E.D, which is a flat pack shed that can be easily transported and constructed as a venue for various uses, such as creative workshops and public consultations.

Since being created in 2019, thousands of people across the city have taken part in events staged in it at various locations. S.H.E.D was also shortlisted for the prestigious national Shed of the Year competition in 2020.

In addition to the support of the University, the event has been made possible through collaboration with a range civic and arts organisations in the city and beyond, including Derby Cathedral, Derby County Community Trust, Derby City Council, Derby Theatre, Baby People, ArtCoreUK, Quad, Art Council England, Amplify U, M-Prez Enterprise, VoiceMag, National Citizens Society Government Youth Project and Co-Creators Change Midlands Network.

Dr Daithi McMahon, Senior Lecturer in Media at the University and research co-lead for the Derby Voice S.H.E.D project, said: **‘Creating a space for engagement, involvement and partnership is what makes S.H.E.D such an inspiring and important facility for our community.**

**We are collaborating closely with Derby Theatre, which is working with five schools – Bemrose, Hardwick, Murray Park, St James and St Martin’s – as part of the Opportunity Area’s Inclusion Programme that is hearing the ideas of those at risk of exclusion.**

**There are an additional six other groups across the city drawn from organisations such as Safe and Sound that supports young people at risk of sexual exploitation, which are all creating artwork for the installation. We have artists running workshops and creating content for display on S.H.E.D, alongside films of the creative process work for display.**

**Even before the event, we can see the difference it is making to these young people’s lives. For one of the commissioned artists the transformation to their sense of self-esteem has been the most important impact of their involvement, others have been able to purchase equipment which helps them to develop their careers as freelance artists.’**

‘Derby is my home, yet I’ve felt for a long time that I have never made many impactful contributions in my community as an artist until now. The S.H.E.D. installation has given me an opportunity to display art to the public within my community that I believe can help change perspectives about some of the biggest issues in modern societies all around the world, such as Black Lives Matter and cultural interpretations of gender.’

Commissioned artist Mthabisi Mlauzi,  
otherwise known as Tee

‘Derby Cathedral is delighted to host S.H.E.D. and support the project. It’s so important that the voices of young people are heard and that they have a safe space to express their concerns, perceptions and dreams. We hope everyone finds some sanctuary in the Cathedral.’

The Very Revd Dr Peter Robinson, Dean of Derby

‘We are thrilled to be working in partnership on this exciting project. It’s a fantastic platform for young people in our city to ensure their voices are heard. It links perfectly with the Opportunity Area Inclusion Programme we are leading on, which aims to support children and young people at risk of exclusion. Youth voice is a key part of this work and it’s critical that we understand and listen to the needs of all young people. We can’t wait to visit the event!’

Jo Wilkinson, Schools Development Manager,  
Derby County Community Trust

For more information about the event visit [weareshed.co.uk/projects/derby-voice](https://weareshed.co.uk/projects/derby-voice)

To find out more about Designing Dialogue CIC that runs S.H.E.D, visit the [project’s page on the University website](#)

