

This is the first book that documents and reflects on an aspect of the *Temporary Contemporary* initiative. Launching in 2018, *Temporary Contemporary* is a collaboration between the School of Art, Design and Architecture at the University of Huddersfield and Kirklees Council. This collaboration, in the form of an action research project, has sought to reflect on the efficacy, meanings and wider contribution of cultural activity in Huddersfield town and beyond. It is one small part of a bigger project about the future cultural heart of Huddersfield.

Huddersfield is a town in Northern England with a population of around 160,000, separated from larger urban centres and neighbouring towns by encircling hills and mountains. According to the 2015 and 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation published by the government, it is one of the most deprived areas of the UK. The town, like much of the UK, was seeing shop closures prior to the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, as a result of factors including austerity policies and online retail.

The title *Creating Vibrant Spaces to Support the Conditions for Creative and Cultural Activity* refers to the aims of *Temporary Contemporary* in its entirety. The initiative achieves these aims through populating former retail spaces in the town with exhibitions and events, fostering partnerships and creating networking opportunities for cultural and creative producers, repurposing fine historic buildings and making connections with rich cultural traditions in the town including music, theatre and textiles.

The contents of this book focus on a specific strand of the initiative, the first year (2018-2019) of its exhibition programme in the Market Gallery, a white cube gallery within Queensgate Indoor Market. It discusses seventeen exhibitions, curated by staff members and postgraduate students in the School of Art, Design and Architecture. However, the aim of this focus is to better contextualise and understand the collaborative nature of *Temporary Contemporary* as a growing cultural ecology in Huddersfield and how it has developed, in partnership with Kirklees Council, which includes working with the Creative Development Team in Queensgate Indoor Market and more recently in the Piazza Shopping Centre.

Therefore, the four chapters seek to contextualise the exhibitions in relation to the place-based making and action research we have developed through this collaboration. We have engaged with mixed cultural ecologies as an important framework for exploring the relationship between ways of working in a live environment and in collaboration with others.

This book provides one contribution to the many discussions about the role of culture in towns and cities. The insights of our collaborative research may be of interest and use to policy makers, academics, artists, curators and anyone else with a concern about the cultural and social future of towns and cities in the UK and beyond.

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